

THEATRICAL BIOGRAPHY:
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 P R I N C I P A L P E R F O R M E R S
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 T h r e e T h e a t r e s R o y a l .

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T O G E T H E R W I T H

*Critical and impartial Remarks on their
 respective professional Merits.*

V O L . II.

D U B L I N :

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Theatrical Biography, &c.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Mrs. YATES.

IT is perhaps happy for the lovers of theatrical entertainment, that the avenues to the stage are rendered so open and accessible; did managers, like the heads of other professions, enter into a previous examination of private character, it might deter many from the trial; and the theatre, at this day, be divested of numerous *genii*, whose talents, without this after-cultivation, might have languished in the shade, obscure and undistinguished.

To explore the origin of this heroine, we should have the lantern and industry of
Dio-

Diogenes, and after all, perhaps, be as unsuccessful as he was in the discovery: peace then be to the memory of the morning of her life, since it set in so cloudy and unsettled; nor have we a right to urge it as a reproach, since every body will allow, however obscure it might be, she has entitled herself to distinction from this line of Mr. Pope,

"Æt well your part, there all the honour lies."

It was under the name of Miss G——, or (to speak in the language of those who have a memory for ill-natured vulgarisms) *Moll G——*, that Mrs. Yates made her first proposals to the managers of Drury-lane; after a few rehearsals it was found her *person* only spoke in her favour, and merely on this account she was taken in under the double character of *dresser* and *mute*, at the considerable salary of *twenty shillings per week*. It may be thought strange, that one who has since turned out such an acquisition to the stage, should promise so unsuccessfully in the beginning; but such is the nature of some talents, like slow plants, they procrastinate their appearance above ground only to vegetate with more strength, and bloom to more advantage.

Naturally possessing the seeds of theatric genius, her inclinations strongly supported them, and she neglected no opportunity to observe on the best performers, and turn that observation

vation to advantage: it was a long time, however, before she was permitted to *speak*; at last an opportunity presented itself, the sudden illness of one of the actresses, where a good figure was necessary, obliged the prompter to look round the theatre for an immediate supply; Mrs. Yates being the only person remarkably happy in this respect, was asked whether she would *attempt* it; her heart bounded at the question, she sat down to it with avidity, and, after a while, made herself so perfect in it, that her performance, like a talismanic power, broke the spells of her *quondam* silence, and she was immediately called up to fill characters of more consequence, whilst her salary was proportionably increased.

Mr. Yates, who had been a comedian of long standing in the same house, whether from the attractions of her person, (which to this hour is commanding) or whether he foresaw the advantage she would be to him, one day, in her profession, made honourable love to her, which after a short courtship was accepted. Under the direction of so veteran an instructor, she began to make rapid improvements;—she now began to perceive herself possessed of qualities she was not heretofore acquainted with, and under this conviction, looked forward to the first theatrical distinction: she did not deceive herself,——genius aided by perseverance will combat any thing; every season drew out a latent charm,

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charm, which alike recommended her to the notice of the managers and the town.

It was almost impossible for so fine a woman in this public situation to be without admirers, particularly as it was said by some, and recollected by others, that there was a time when her virgin heart was not flint against solicitation; this consideration, with the improvement of her personal charms, drew many in her train; amongst the rest a noble Peer, Lord Hun—t—n, whom fame has reported to have succeeded: this nobleman, however, paid his addresses with such outward respect, and saved appearances so well, that they never gave the least domestic disturbance, notwithstanding trifles of a lesser nature often found them in the spirit of altercation.

A little gallantry, however, did not at all rebate her passion for the stage, to be at the top of which, was the object she now never lost sight of; accident went along with her warmest wishes,—the death of Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard opened a chasm for her, to which her merit claimed an undoubted preference; the last of these events, which happened about five years ago, threw her into a new cast of parts, which her industry and talents were equal to, and in a very little time she was confessedly allowed to be the first actress in Drury-lane theatre.

Seeing herself in this eminent situation, and supported by her husband, who had very near
equal

equal merit in his way, interest began to take place; they therefore gave notice to the managers to increase their salary considerably above what it had been before: the acting manager, who happened to be stimulated by every whit as strong a principle of interest, demurred; and many conferences took place; the result of which was, they enlisted under Colman and Company, who had just purchased the patent of Covent-garden theatre from Rich's executors: this defection roused the manager from his penury, and he instantly supplied their places by the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Barry, who have since given such universal satisfaction to the town.

In this situation Mr. and Mrs. Yates have still continued. To speak of her as an actress, there is no doubt she is the only one at present on the stage, that can be drawn in a comparison with Mrs. Barry; at the same time we cannot hesitate in deciding the preference to the latter. Mrs. Yates has feelings, but then she is often deficient in judgment: her voice wants both the variety and music of the other, and her attitudes too frequently carry the marks of vulgarity and affectation: in those parts of tragedy, however, where *rage* and *domineering* are called for, she has no equal; these she performs so *naturally*, as to lose sight of fiction, and you must believe her to be what she represents.

Miss



Miss MACKLIN.

PERHAPS this lady is the only instance of a person's being regularly bred to the theatre; the general attractions to this way of life, are love of indolence and loss of fortune, as if inclination alone could fit them for a profession that requires the most universal exertion of talents of any, and where a single deficiency is often the cause of precluding them the encouragement of the public.

Her father is the celebrated Charles Macklin, author of *Love A-la-mode*, and several other pieces that have been well received, and who formerly belonged to Covent-garden theatre, and acquired such reputation as an actor in Shylock, Sir Gilbert Wrangle, &c. so that from this lady's situation in life, she must have had an early knowledge of the drama. To fit her, however, regularly, for this profession, he had her instructed in all those branches of polite education that entitle a woman to the first circles of life; at a very early age she could speak French fluently, for which she took a trip to the Continent. He next had her instructed in Italian,
nor

nor was she less deficient in music, drawing, and a perfect knowledge of the *belles lettres*, so that at the age of eighteen, Miss Macklin was said to be one of the most accomplished women in England.

Though old Macklin took these uncommon pains with her education, he had a temper that made it impossible for any one to live with him in a state of dependence; if any person could do it, it must be his daughter, whose natural disposition and duty both strove hard for such a performance. Finding the task impossible, she put herself under the protection of Mr. Rich, then manager of Covent-garden, where, after going through the usual time of preparation, she made her first appearance in Polly, in the *Biggar's Opera*; her elegant figure and taste in music, gained her uncommon applause in this character; and though her very great success was a little beforehand with her deserts, she has since repaid with interest what the town, like a thrifty guardian, had laid out in applause towards her first encouragement.

Though contented in her situation, and never under the necessity or inclination of rambling, her life is tissued with some very extraordinary circumstances unusual in the life of an actress. Her qualifications producing her a very genteel salary, with a very good acquaintance, she humbly sits down to the quiet enjoyment of them, without hunting for new gratifications: she is unfashionable enough

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enough too, to be *religious*, and in consequence, to contract a number of out-of-the-way notions, for which she has, no doubt, often underwent the laugh of the green room; she goes to her devotions oftener than she goes to rehearsals; penurious in her pleasures, though benevolent to distress; and considering the stage merely "as it holds the mirror up to nature," her practice has been a constant example of her theory.

There is another still more extraordinary trait in her character than all this;—though she has been on the stage near fifteen years, and on her entrance, considered as one of the finest and most accomplished women in England, though without the care of a guardian, beset with solicitation, and the force of bad example, suspicion has never once breathed upon her fame, and the dissipated world are reduced to place her celibacy to the account of *coldness of constitution*.

Her character as an actress stands in no less a favourable view,—endued with so many acquired requisites, nature has not been backward in lending her assistance, and she shines a particular favourite both of Thalia and Melpomene. Could she disengage herself of that diffidence which has been the companion of her youth, and endeavour to forget she is speaking to an audience, it would still add to her improvement, and the pleasure of the public.

Mrs.

Mrs. MATTOCKS.

SOME people are so much in the possession of obvious talents, that let them be placed in never so opposite a situation of life for the exertion of them, you can see the mistake of fortune, and at once pronounce what they are really fit for: had Mrs. Mattocks been *educated a nun*, it would require no great depth of penetration to know she was born an *actress*.

This lady, like Miss Macklin, is a child of the stage; her father and mother (Mr. and Mrs. Hallam) being both in that profession at the time of her birth; willing, however, to give her the entire choice of her walk in life, they waved their assent till she was of an age capable of deciding for herself, without the danger of being dazzled with those false theatrical appearances that are so much the *will-o'-wisp*s of unexperienced youth. Her maturer age seconded her early inclinations, and her deserved success as a comedian, has since proved they did not run counter to her genius.

Having

Having an exceeding good natural voice, improved by a knowledge of music, her first outlet was in the singing characters, where she acquired for some time the reputation of a good second singer; but her *forte* was not as yet discovered;—study and observation on some good originals tempted her to try the sprightly parts of low comedy; in these she succeeded to her wishes; the delicacy of her person, the vivacity of her temper with a distinguishing judgment, all shewed themselves to advantage in this walk, and she was in a little time considered by the town as a very universal and useful performer.

She had just gained this character with the public, when Mr. Mattocks of the same house paid his addresses to her; he too was a vocal performer of some consequence, and ranked as no inconsiderable actor. Sympathy of sentiment seemed to form this union; however, it met with obstacles on the side of her parents, who might have considered the marriage of their daughter in some respect an alienation of their property; but the parties were determined to be happy in spite of the obstacles of either laws, or parents, a trip to France baffled both, and on their return they were one flesh.

For some years the torch of Hymen burned unobscured; but such is the contagion of the green room, that to be strictly virtuous almost amounts to a *particularity*: whether it was Mrs. Mattocks would not be *particular*,

voice, or whether it was her inclinations were first produced to make another preference, the publisher will best decide from the following sketch of her amorous.

As to his *face*, it would be a fortune to him in his profession, provided the principal actor was always to be an *assassin*; his voice the true accompaniment of that face,—final, hollow, and inarticulate; hence his *bravos* are *bravos*, his *lovers ghosts*; in short, the only thing *tolerable* about him is his person, and even that becomes *intolerable* the moment it is set in motion.

Such is the portrait of the *amiable* Mr. ———! The husband at first talked loud of this affair; said he had *seen* his disgrace, described situations,—and absolutely, for some time, parted from her bed: but prudence soon assumed her throne,—a disunion of persons must form a disunion of salary, and his wife's such as was not contemptible; he was beginning to consider it in this light, when the offending fair one, like the repenting Eve, stood before him bathed in penitence and tears.

—— Soon his heart relented towards her, his life so late, and sole delight, now at his feet submissive in distress.

In short, the quarrel was friendly adjusted on the appealing to himself “whether he could suppose her capable of relinquishing so
“ agree-

"agreeable a person as he was for *such* a
 "ugly dog as Mr. B——y." Happiness
 has since attended their *steps*.

It is the peculiar distinction of this actress
 that she possesses so lively a sensibility about
 her, as to *realize* her parts; nor is she de-
 ficient in judgment to prevent that sensibility
 from verging to the unnatural: to these ad-
 vantages she unites a pleasing person, an
 agreeable voice, which on the whole, render
 her one of the most useful performers be-
 longing to the theatre in which she is engaged.

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Mrs. BULKLEY.

THERE is nothing can be a greater absurdity, than the grave manner some people talk to you about happiness; every man points it out from the impulse of his own breast, and wonders, from the obviousness of the path, it is not more generally pursued; not considering the object of your admonitions may have certain dispositions and cravings, that will tempt him to forego every interested consideration for his present gratification.

None can be a greater instance of the truth of this position, than the fair subject of this page: like the two preceding ladies, she was, in some respect, born a daughter of the stage, being niece to Mrs. R——ch, wife to the late manager of Covent-garden theatre: her aunt, being left a widow when she was very young, was enabled by the large fortune bequeathed her by her husband, to apportion a considerable sum for her use, and as her children were all well provided for, it was expected Miss W——'s fortune could not be less than five thousand pounds:

Mrs. R——ch encouraged this opinion by the uncommon pains she took in her education, which being set off by a perfectly agreeable person, might have led her to much superior views than the most exalted situation the theatre could afford; but till we *feel* like the person we advise, admonition is fruitless; the stage was her early captivation, and contrary to the advice of all her friends, she embraced it as her profession.

Her first appearance at Covent-garden was in the character of a dancer; passionately fond of this science, which she learned as an amusement, she now pursued as a profession, and so great an adept did she shew herself, as to give great entertainment to the public. It is true, did her merit in *this line* rest solely on *execution*, numbers would have eclipsed her; but to this she added grace, expression, and accompaniment, which justly entitled her to peculiar applause. From this she, occasionally, stepped into the walks of tragedy and comedy, where she conducted herself with sensibility and judgment, and though without exhibiting any uncommon powers in either, was always agreeable, pertinent, and decent. Whilst in this situation, in estimation with the public, at a good salary, and restored to her aunt's affections, she still might have expected to have matched to advantage; but thus is the ungovernable caprice of fortune! her virgin heart received such a twang from the *bow* of Mr. Bulkley, one of the Covent-garden band of music, that before it was known

known they *could be acquainted*, they were married.

This second act of imprudence had well nigh steeled her aunt's affections, did not her good sense lead her to observe, that though she might have made a more splendid union, she probably might not make so happy a one. Bulkley, though not refined in his understanding, or elegant in his address, had a grateful heart and useful virtues; these weighed with her, and supposing, at the same time, her niece would have buried all her indiscretions here, she again recalled her to the same place in her affections.

"Marry in haste, and repent at leisure," says the old proverb,—so said Mrs. B—; a few months had only passed over, when she began to perceive herself duped by her passions; her husband had not only too great a *sameness* about him, but possessed *domestic virtues* incompatible with *variety*; *still life* was his object; *bustle*, and the *love of pleasure*, her's. Whilst she was debating how to reconcile these differences, a few *pressing compliments* were paid her by the late *playing manager* of that house; she could not resist such an hero, and the *stage* (as fame strongly insists on it) was preferred to the *orchestra*.

Accident often sets bounds to our passions, when judgment has very little interest in the regulation of them;—an intemperate life hurried off the object of her affections from the great stage of this world, almost in the infancy of their amour. Such an unexpected

stroke carried every poignancy to her heart she for a while saw no company,—got into deep mourning,—and went thro' the whole of those awful ceremonies, which are only due to the memory of the nearest relations. Time, that recovered her spirits, had no effect on her duty; the affections due to her union were now no longer remembered, and like the dew of the morning, were exhaled in the sunshine of her pleasures.

Probably on her emerging from this gloom she gave a loose to variety, only with a view to cure herself of reflexion; but these are dangerous alternatives, and often settle themselves into habits, when the original cause for which they were pursued have ceased to exist.

The husband, under these circumstances, is so blinded from gratitude and affection, as not to perceive her conduct, whilst it is the constant buzz of the green room, and the pain of her relations. Youthful indiscretions, however, have their date, and there are reclaimed liberties amongst women, as well men; it is therefore to be hoped, from the conciliating tenor of her husband's behaviour, and the satiety and disgust which ever accompany those unwarrantable pursuits, the time is not very far off that will recal her to the paths of honour and propriety.

As an actress, Mrs. Bulkley stands under the predicament of *mediocrity*; though from the agreeableness of her person, and the elegance of her address, she often rises superior to this character;—her talents lie pretty equal-

between tragedy and comedy, though her
 vice, (and if we may judge from her con-
 st) her *inclinations* seem better suited to the
 latter.

Mrs. GREEN.

SOME performers rise, by such imper-
 ceptible degrees, to the notice of the pub-
 lic, that their early anecdotes, like those in
 the infancy of states, are too inconsiderable for
 public record; it is in vain we search for them
 when they become eminent,—we may as well
 as an elegant modern author expresses it)
 follow the chace by meridian splendor.”
 Such has been the fate of Mrs. Green! enter-
 ing on the stage in an inferior capacity, and
 making her way to the first *forum*, through a
 number of years; the steps by which she as-
 cended are forgotten, because they were thought
 needless.

In which of the theatres therefore Mrs.
 Green made her first appearance, or with
 what success, curiosity must suspend her en-
 quiry; however, she seems to be an actress
 of that stamp, who has carefully studied her
 profession, and having the advantages of good
 models, she has availed herself of both with
 such diligence, as to be considered, at this
 day, at the top of her profession.

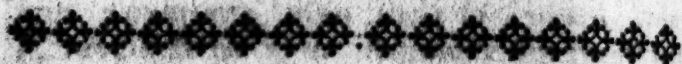
The period she began to be first taken notice of, was about the time Mr. Garrick came to the management of Drury lane theatre. The very great care and attention this skilful director took in the cultivation of her talents, might very well account for her progress; nor is it to be wondered at, when it is said there were still stronger reasons for attention than mere managerical regard. Mrs. Green, difficult as it may be believed at present, from the unwieldiness of her figure, and want of personal charms, captivated the heart of her theatrical sovereign: who then could be obdurate when Roscius made love? Oft have we seen whole rows of females melted by his tale, when he only *assumed* this character. How impracticable then for a single female to withstand his realizing the lover? The lady *could* not be singularly cruel; sensible of the mischiefs she had done, she repaired them by good-nature;—a chopping boy bore witness to their loves,—whose death is since to be lamented, both on a private and public account; on the former, as it was the *only* child our English Roscius ever had; on the latter, as posterity may possibly be deprived of one day *seeing the father blazoned in the son*.

This union, however, has been long since dissolved, nor has even the scandalous chronicle ever spoke of any other on the part of the lady: ill nature might say she carries her protection

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ection about her, but they must be little skilled in the history of the sex, who don't know *honour* is their only guardian; and that however a woman may be deficient in those graces that attract the eye of a statuary, so wide and capricious is the circle of taste, she might possess a lover who looks on her with admiration.

It is a sort of misfortune for this actress, that we have not as yet adopted the French custom of making important characters of chambermaids; as she is possessed, in an eminent degree, of all those requisites necessary to excel in that province,—great humour, lively spirits—pertness—and an affectation of voice. To consider her in her present round of parts, she carries this last too far; but this error should be the more readily overlooked, as it is the growth of perfection. In short, Mrs. Green may be considered as the second edition of Mrs. Clive, though less voluminous in merit and contents, not without many spirited strokes of the original.



Mrs. THOMPSON.

IT would be perhaps impossible for this lady to apply her talents to any other profession than the stage with equal success, when we consider the peculiarity of their force; *nature* gave her voice, humour, and expression, — *art*, judgment, correction, and taste.

She is the daughter of Michael, and Claremont Poicteur, who many years kept a music-shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, and her first onset in life well known from the *recorded* connexion between her and Mr. V——n of Drury-lane theatre; for the particulars of which, we must refer our readers to the memoirs of her husband in the preceding part of this work: we shall only observe, that an act of parliament (only passed a few months before that event) dissolved the connexion, and left her as much disengaged as ever.

At the period of the separation, Miss Poicteur (for she immediately re-assumed her maiden name) was on Covent-garden stage
in

in reputation as a singer; her talents for humour, and the judicious force of her action, even in this line, discovered great talents for comedy; which Mr. Rich observing, called her up to many parts of a sprightly cast, all of which she acquitted with a spirit that confirmed his judgment of her abilities.

Whilst she was thus rising in reputation as a singer and actress, the former object of her affection and her vows, (Mr. Vernon) was drinking large draughts of Lethe in Ireland to the oblivion of past cares; Miss Poicteur formerly sympathized too much with him to be behind hand on this occasion, she accordingly pledged him; and receiving solicitations of an honourable nature from Mr. Thompson, a linen-draper of some consequence in the city, she at last granted him her hand, and Hymen closed her marriage vows, a second time, with his benediction.

Some few months had scarce been wasted, when Mrs. Thompson began ardently to wish for the dissolving power of a second act of parliament: whether it was the plodding ideas of a mechanic did not correspond with her lively sentiments, or that the name of marriage carried the bugbear, she was determined to be once more her own mistress. Other reasons of a more private nature, it is said, have been urged by the lady for this resolution; however it was, she

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scorned to play the hypocrite,—her conduct hourly told Thompson it was his interest to disunite; he therefore, after first trying every method to avoid breaking with a woman whom he sincerely loved, at last came to a resolution to discard her his heart and house for ever.

Mrs. Thompson's after-conduct, however, has shewn it was not the *marriage* but the *man* she hated, no one having a sincerer dislike to a monastic life, which she proved by immediately forming a *third* connexion with Mr. Bannister, of Drury-lane theatre. The *roughness* of this gentleman's address, and the pleasing presage of a *deep tenor voice*, were too powerful to be resisted on her side; and though on his he had a wife and three children, yet sharing six pounds a week, a good benefit, with a person rather *en bon point*, were too desirable objects to be relinquished; he therefore, by a very easy transition, (however unaccountable for by either civil or canon law, yet reconcilable to the sons and daughters of the stage) went into *keeping* with this lady, generously remitting *one sixth part* of her income for the weekly support of his family, who, from his *paternal tenderness*, he lodges in some garret in the next street.

This union, however strangely formed, seems to have hit her taste for *happiness* with more success than her two former, if we may be allowed to denominate *sensual gratification*

tification by that epithet. Singly, their passions out-run their income; but thus consolidated with some very considerable additions from their public attendance at Marybone gardens, they are enabled to wallow in all the luxury of theatrical dissipation; insomuch so, that the revels of the night often break in on the business of the morning; an instance of which gave rise to the four following lines of Mr. Colman's, on Mrs. Thompson's sending him a sham note one morning last winter, that she fell down stairs, and could not attend rehearsal.

So, Madam Doreas, in your airs,
 You send us word you cannot stir,
 Because you've tumbl'd down the stairs,
 And fell against a Bannister.

But let us turn from such a scene of flagrant, unfeeling dissipation, — *modesty stops her nose at it.*

Whatever vices or follies her *private* character is subject to, the pen of satire to be just, must be silent when we speak of her *public* one; here it is panegyric must come in to relieve those shades we have been delineating, and give *one pleasing point* of view to the picture: here it is the critic may repose his eye, his ear, and his judgment, with satisfaction, nor venture to wish for an amendment, lest it should turn to a fault, who, for instance, that has seen Mrs. Thompson

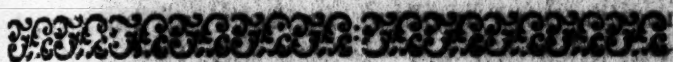
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Thompson in *Midas*, the *Maid of the Mill*, *La Serva Padrona*, and the many dramatic pieces in this cast, but is tempted to parody these words of the poet?

Where on the stage such various beauties shine,
On private faults 'twere idle to refine.

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Mr. R O S S.

PREVIOUS to entering into the memoirs of this gentleman, it will be necessary to say something of the situation of his father, as it was from his uncommon neglect the stage is indebted to Mr. Ross for the character of a player.

Alexander Ross was formerly practising writer to the Signet at Edinburgh, and in the year 1722 settled in London as a solicitor of appeals, which with the interest of several lands that he enjoyed in right of his brother, Captain Ross, made his income very considerable. David, the present subject of these memoirs, was born in the year 1728, and at a proper period was put to Westminster, where, so early as the age of thirteen, he lost his father's affections by some school indiscretions, which he was so unfortunate as never to regain. What these were, have never been sufficiently pointed out, — not even by his father's letters to his sister in the height of his resentment, as then he only attributes the cause of his anger to his son's *heedlessness* and *inattention*.

Thus

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Thus poor Ross had no sooner finished his studies at Westminster, than, for a few indiscretions incident to boys of his age, he was discarded his father's affection and protection; in vain he wrote, in vain he solicited;—this parent, like the unfeeling mother of Savage, natural son to Lord Rivers, seemed hurt by his son's existence, and withdrew from him every little assistance that his youth, his situation, and inexperience might require. In this dilemma, the stage presented itself, and possessing the advantages of a good figure and education, they secured him a rank in Covent-garden theatre, sufficient to maintain himself in the character of a gentleman.

As the stage was a profession he applied to, partly from his having no other alternative, it is not to be wondered he did not early exert himself. Another embarrassment on his powers might arise from the great probability of his father's relenting: however, this last hope was finally overthrown by his death, at which he made a will entirely in favour of his sister, leaving him only one shilling; nay, he carried his resentment so far, as to be capable of sporting with his son's misfortunes, in the hour of quitting this world, as will appear from the following injunction in his will; “And also that the said Elizabeth Ross shall be obliged to pay, or cause to be paid, to her said brother

brother David Ross, the sum of one shilling upon the first day of every month of May, that being his birth day, thereby to put him in mind of the *misfortune* he had to be born."

This stroke finally decided all his hopes; he therefore applied himself closely to his profession, the consequence of which was, a few years raised him to a considerable rank in the theatre, being universally looked upon as a rising performer. Pretty much about this period it was that Lord Sp——r threw his eyes on him as a proper person to accomplish an act of benevolence and humanity, that will ever reflect the highest credit on his Lordship's heart; the celebrated F——n——y M——y had been debauched by his father,—to atone for such a fault, he looked upon as an act of justice; he therefore proposed her as a wife to Mr. Ross, with a settlement of two hundred pounds *per annum*. Ross's dissipations demanded such an addition to his fortune, and as the lady retained nothing of her former situation but her charms, the contract was signed, and the marriage celebrated.

The consequence of this match was pretty much what may be expected from a young man who had not as yet learned to correct his passions; the recollection of his wife's *past* errors (though ungenerous then to be reflected on) might have assisted them:—however it was, his happiness was not at home,

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home,—he sought for it behind the scenes, and found it in the *beels* of a female dancer, (Miss T—st) with whom he carried on so open a commerce, as to reach the knowledge of the lowest retainers to the house. His wife, under all this, never lost sight of the strictest discretion; the errors (rather would we call them the necessities) of her youth corrected the passions of her maturer age; and instead of reproaching, she has, at all times, endeavoured to reclaim him by the most gentle and *exemplary* behaviour.

About four years ago Mr. Ross purchased the Edinburgh patent, and being obliged to reside there in the course of his profession, he learned that by the laws of Scotland, a person could not will his estate by mere words of exclusion, without an *express conveyance* of inheritance at the same time; which last circumstance had been omitted by his father. This he thought a proper ground to proceed for the recovery of what he always considered himself as the *natural*, now as the *legal* heir to: accordingly he brought his action of reduction against his sister, which, after being argued before Lord Kennett, Ordinary, December, 1769, he gave the interlocutor in his favour. His sister and husband then applied by representation, in which they were a second time worsted; they ultimately brought it before the House of Lords here last session, where
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the legality and justice of Mr. Ross's title was so ably pleaded by the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General, that their Lordships gave a decree in his favour, by which he has since recovered near six thousand pounds.

Having disposed of his theatre at Edinburgh for three years to Mr. Foote, he appeared again at Covent-garden last winter;—but justice obliges us to observe with his usual abilities,—in his figure he is grown fat and unwieldy,—in his face too plump to exhibit those distensions and relaxations of the muscles, without which an actor can give little expression;—his voice, which was formerly agreeable, and well toned, wants compass from the same cause, and puts you more in mind, from the frequency of its breaks, of an *asthmatic*, than a complaining lover; however, there are still about him occasional strokes of great merit, which, did he cultivate by exerting them oftener, there would be no doubt of his being a recovery to that stage.

Mr.



Mr. S M I T H.

IN the course of these pages we have often found accident and distress the avenues to the stage : in the character of Mr. Smith, we, however, are furnished with an instance of one whose education, as well as disposition, previously qualified him for this profession; being early bred at Westminster-school, and from thence removed to Cambridge, where he went through the circle of academic studies.

What particularly induced Mr. Smith, in contempt of the opinion of the world, to attach himself, in preference, to this line of life, we cannot exactly tell; it appears to us to be owing to that predisposing something in every man's breast, which in spite of either advice, or interested views, blindly urges us forward to the completion of our wishes.

His first appearance was at Covent-garden theatre, in the character of Theodosius, in the *Force of Love*; Mr. Barry played Varanes the

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the same night; and tho' the reputation of the latter had been already well established, Mr. Smith seconded such abilities, with a spirit and dignity that gave the strongest earnest of his future theatrical merit: the public were, however, in some respect mistaken; his merit in acting arising principally from his judgment, he soon reached the utmost line of his abilities, and though, on account of many stage requisites, he has long been considered as one of the most principal actors of Covent-garden, nature has denied some particulars that will ever keep him (in the critical eye) from reaching the first forum.

Mr. Smith had been scarcely fixed as an established performer, when, from the intimacy he had early contracted with a noble Lord (Lord S——ch) he likewise contracted an acquaintance with that nobleman's sister. To a single lady, from the elegance of his person and address, his acquaintance was dangerous: it turned out so,—and tho' the idea of his being on the stage weighed with her for some time as an objection, love, almighty love! which levels all distinctions, silenced those unphilosophical debates, and, after a short courtship, they both entered into the indissoluble bonds of matrimony.

The marriage was no sooner proclaimed, than the *noble house of Montague* was all in a flame; comparisons were formed—reflexions thrown

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thrown out — and the words *vagabond* and *nobility* often joined together, to shew the separate force of their significations: however, in the midst of this bustle, Smith waited on his noble brother-in-law, and, after telling an *unvarnished tale*, made this proposal, — that if the family he had so much *disgraced*, would allow him for life a sum equal to his theatrical acquisitions, he would cease to *dis honour* them; but if not, having no other alternative, he must even follow that profession, disgraceful as it may appear in *their eyes*, to prevent *acts* of greater dishonour in *his*. Fair as this proposal was, and great as their regards were for the lady, it was rejected, and Mr. Smith very prudently pursued his former course, with a reputation and success equal to his most animated expectations.

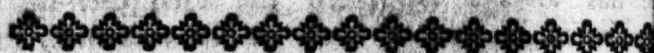
This union, however, was soon dissolved by the death of the lady, whom justice obliges us to mention, was happy in an excellent husband; perhaps much more so, than if she had followed the advice of her relations, if we may judge from the general marriages of noble families, which are little better than junctions of interests, to prosecute unwarrantable pleasures with more facility. After continuing a widower for a few years, he married a lady from some of the country parts of England, with a very considerable fortune: she is still living, and with her he seems to enjoy that domestic kind

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of happiness, which is not to be sought for behind the scenes: indeed Mr. Smith's views originally seemed to have other directions than the generality of players: his temper was of the frugal, judicious, and sensible kind; and though he has always supported the character of a gentleman in private and public conduct, he has been enabled to lay by a genteel provision for life, whenever he chuses to retire from the stage.

In entering on the public merit of this gentleman, we are aware of combating public opinion, in which this amiable performer has been rich in since his first commencement on the stage; however, that impartiality which we would wish to observe must take place. Mr. Smith's person is certainly of that size and proportion that pleases the eye; he has beside this, an agreeableness in his address that prepossesses in his favour: with these perfections, no wonder then he has been long a favourite of the town: but the critic must go further,—his face, though thus pleasing to be looked at, wants expression; and his voice, though clear and sonorous, wants variation; the same lines of expression, with very little difference, tell for contrary passions; and his tones, through a continual sameness of inflection, strike on your ear towards the middle of a play, like the even noise of a waterfall: would he advert more to comedy, we would venture to assure him more success; there is a spirit in his comic performances, or as Dryden more

more happily calls it, a *self-breeding* about him, which bids fair to leave him without competitor in this walk.



Mr. SAVIGNY.

THE stage, above all other professions, has its allurements principally for the young and gay; the sentiments of love and passion are particularly calculated for this period of our lives, and were the generality of performers prevented encouraging their theatrical inclinations till maturer age, the stage, like any other common business, would have little temptation beside that of interest; Mr. Savigny, however, is very singular in regard to the period of his commencing actor; perhaps unprecedented, when the public are informed he was about the age of thirty-six, and under no temptation of a pecuniary inducement.

This gentleman was bred a razor-maker and has lived many years in that occupation in Pall-Mall; from a philosophic knowledge of his profession, which he exemplified in a little treatise on the tempering of steel, he rose himself to eminence in an art which he seemed calculated to pursue, both from knowledge

and attention. How then are we to account for his, so late in life, adverting to the stage? but from the irresistible force of nature, that, according to Horace, however repelled by art, will, notwithstanding, recover her former situation.

Yet even here, his attaching himself to the theatre, seems, in a great measure, to be decided by accident, as appears from the following circumstance of its being brought about, Mr. Savigny, being early possessed of an histrionic cacœthes, often, at the request of his friends, amused them with repeating some passages out of our best tragedies. It happened one night as he was rehearsing the part of Oroonoko, he received such applause from the company, as brought on a bet he would not perform that part on the stage; fired with the spirit of emulation, he accepted it, and sitting down to study it more attentively, he afterwards played it for the benefit of one of his friends, at Covent-garden theatre, he, however, still secreted his name and situation, by attending the rehearsals always ready dressed; and as he was blacked, it favoured the deception according to his wishes.

Who can be deaf to the blandishments of fame? when Young tells us that even

The modest shun it but to make it sure.

The applause Mr. Savigny acquired in this part, dropped him into an open declaration for the stage;

stage; and being no longer able to suppress the power of nature, stimulated by ambition, he late winter appeared in Selim, in the tragedy of Barbarossa. In this character he found his former reputation no way diminished; the town hitherto abused by the attempts of ignorant adventurers, perceived a degree of judgment and pathos about this person, that bid fair for future excellence; hence they gave him every encouragement; the play had a run for several nights to crowded and brilliant audiences, and the print-sellers taking the hint from the approbation of the public, produced his portrait in their shops, in one of the most affecting scenes of that tragedy. During the run of this piece we cannot omit a *bon mot* of the late Sir F. Delaval's, which we hope will not be thought unrelative to these memoirs. Sir Francis, sitting with Lady Harrington one night in the stage box, my lady, who is well known to be full of love and tenderness, turned about in a transport of sensibility, as Savigny was in one of his most distressing situations, "Good God, that man cuts me to the very heart;" "I don't at all wonder at it," replied the knight, "consider, he's a razor-maker."

As Mr. Savigny's early entering into business confined him principally to his shop, his life must have been too *still* to admit of the shades that make a piece pleasing from variety; we shall therefore close these memoirs with a few strictures on his merit as an actor.

That he was born with talents for the stage, we will as readily agree to, as we lament he did not produce them sooner; but we are afraid this delay has been as fatal to him, as the neglect of gathering fruit in the proper season, where, from being left too long on the boughs, they have passed the season of maturation, and consequently lost much of their original flavour. It is in the early part of life, when the ardour of enthusiasm is up, and the represented passions correspond with our own, that our *Romeos, Alexanders, Rangers, and Lotharios*, are to be found; maturer age looks upon them with too great a degree of coolness, and whenever they are well represented in this period, it arises partly from habit, and the recollection of their being once fond of them. Mr. Savigny, however, has a degree of judgment about him, that shews him to be always well skilled in the knowledge of his author; his voice too is in his favour, though it is not so strong as may be wished, and were his person a little less deficient in point of dignity, there would be no doubt of his taking the lead of the tragedians of that house.



Mr. S H U T E R.

THIS comedian has so much of the *original* about him, both in his *life* and *acting*, that his biographer can have no other line to go by than the closest observation of both: the former abounds with so much whim and adventure, that were we to take in every circumstance, the portrait would swell to such a *Colossian* size, as to disqualify it for a place in these memoirs. Waving, therefore, many particulars, we shall select from this variety such parts as are necessary to give an idea of the origin and progress of this son of humour who, take him all in all, is perhaps unequalled in his cast.

From what parents Mr. Shuter is descended, may probably be best known in the records of St. Giles's; if we may credit the account given by himself, he tells us he was born in a cellar near Covent-garden, and is the offspring of a chairman on one side, and an oyster-woman on the other. Whatever the fact was, he was early thrown on the world, friendless, and uneducated, till chance directed him to the service of Mr. Chapman, a veteran actor

actor of Drury-lane, who perceiving strong marks of low humour about him, took him as his apprentice; in this capacity he had frequent opportunities of going behind the scenes, which probably gave him the first passion for the stage; and being a boy of great humour and affability, he recommended himself so much to the notice of the whole green room, that he went under the appellation of *comical Ned*: as he grew up, his talents for drollery increased; and his master soon after dying he followed the fortunes of a country company.

Various were the distresses and adventures he underwent in the course of a few campaigns in this service; such as his being only a sharer of fourpence halfpenny a night, and two ends of candle; and his being once under the necessity of stealing his landlord's sign (which was a loaf, he being a baker.) These anecdotes would lose their effect upon paper, they are only to be told by himself, from whom they receive irresistible humour and drollery; so that to him we shall refer such of our readers as would be informed of these minutiae, promising them they will lose none of their force for his agreeable heightening.

After some years spent in this manner, he got an engagement at Drury-lane, where at first he did very little; appearing before a London audience, where he was obliged to shape his humour to that of the author, relaxed a good deal of his fancy; his *forte* likewise being not yet discovered, assisted it, so

that, excepting some little reputation he got in *Sharpe*, in the *Lying-Valet*, he was scarcely spoke of. However, such talents could not lie long concealed; Mr. Garrick observing his turn, found he only wanted to have his abilities properly directed; for this purpose, he sat down to alter Ben Johnson's *Every Man in his Humor*, and gave the part of *Mr. Stephen* to Shuter; here it was he repaid the manager's judgment, as well as shewed the public the uncommon force of his powers; for though Mr. Garrick and Mr. Woodward added to their already established merit in *Kitely* and *Bobadil*, Shuter carried off equal honours; in short, this play had an uncommon run, from the strength of its support; and his reputation as an actor, received the first token of applause.

Though we before entered a caveat against entering into the many little anecdotes with which the life of this comedian is marked, we cannot in justice omit the following particular, as it lets us a good deal into his character as a man; a circumstance we are always happy in reciting for the followers of the stage, wherever we are given an opportunity.

When Shuter was last in Ireland, he went one day to a fish market in Dublin to buy some fish; as it never entered into any part of his character to be an oeconomist, he suffered himself to be imposed on near double the common price. The fish-woman dreading the little boy, who was to carry it home
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for him, would explain the cheat, offered him a few halfpence for himself, which the boy disdainfully refusing, went up to his employer, and told him the circumstance: Shuter was so struck with this instance of honesty, that he immediately took the boy under his care, provided him with a new suit of cloaths, had him taught to read and write, and brought him over to England, where he probably continues in his service ever since.

There is not an actor perhaps on any stage, that is so much *indebted to nature* as Shuter; to her he owes his *all*; for though arts and education may have made him more general, the question still remains—would he be so original? With strong features, a peculiar turn of countenance, and natural passion for humour, he has the happiness of disposing and altering the muscles of his face into a variety of laughable shapes, which, though they may sometimes border on grimace, are, however, on the whole irresistible; his voice, indeed, does not afford that natural variety, but it abounds in affected tones and whimsical variations, which in some respect more than supply that deficiency. In a word, nursed and educated in the lap of *sportive nature*, his countenance, behaviour, and person, form a picture truly laughable; and though the judgment of the critic often sees him drop the *comedian*, his fancy never loses sight of him as a *comical man*.

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Mr.



Mr. Y A T E S.

THE person who writes the memoirs of this hero, from his own knowledge, must have been many years acquainted with the stage, as he is the oldest actor of any repute at present belonging to either theatre, his commencement being so far back as the year 1737, four years before our English Roscius broke forth in the eastern hemisphere.

His first appearance was at Goodman's-fields theatre, under the then management of Henry Giffard, where he continued for some years; but his success being rather of the middling kind, he left it, and in conjunction with Shuter, and some others, set up a booth at Bartholomew fair, for the representation of *drolls* and *pantomimes*; Pantaloon was Yates's, province; Shuter's Harlequin. It is not to be wondered then, from the abilities of two such comedians, that their success was answerable to their wishes, or that they thus prostituted their talents, when their profits were so considerable.

The entertainments of this place, however, being cried down, put an end to these amusements; and Yates advancing fast in his profession

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profession as a comedian at Drury-lane theatre, his profits enabled him to live very well without it: about this period he likewise enlarged them by his marriage with Miss G—, (the present Mrs. Yates) who owes as great a share of her theatrical reputation to his directions, as his fortune does to her merit.

In the memoirs of Mrs. Yates, we have minutely entered into a detail of her theatrical rise and progress, which were greatly assisted by the death of Mrs. Cibber, which happened in 1765, and that of Mrs. Pritchard in 1768. These chasms introduced her to a new cast of parts, and consequently gave her genius all the exercise it could desire; the town approving her as a very proper successor to two such celebrated actresses, induced her husband to demand an increase of salary proportioned to her merit; but whether the demand was more than adequate, or the parsimony of the managers prevailed, they would not come into his terms; the consequence of which was, they were immediately engaged under Messrs. Colman and Co. (who at that time had just purchased the patent of Mr. Beard, &c.) on their own terms.

Mr. Yates and his wife being many years in the theatre at a good salary, and his being likewise manager of the Birmingham company, have enabled him to lay by for old age. This new engagement extended his income, of which he made a prudent use; for the money he obtained by his profession, he some-

times turned in the stocks; by all which means, he has increased his fortune to a very considerable amount. We are sorry, however, (notwithstanding he has it in his power so much to be otherwise) that the means of being beneficent has not produced the effect; as they are the only actor and actresses of both theatres who have refused to subscribe to the charitable fund for decayed performers, urging the very reason for not doing it, which should the more induce them to do it, "because they shall never want to take the benefit of it *themselves*."

As we have before observed, the stage does not produce an older actor, so we may venture to assert, it does not produce a better comedian in his cast; his particular turn for low comedy, early directed him to those characters that require that qualification, and his observation has always checked his ambition from roving out of that province allotted him by nature; his voice has a touch of hoarseness either natural or artificial, which, with a little alteration, may readily be adapted to the rough notes of the clown, or the broken accents of old age, and did he not sometimes suspend the idea of realizing his characters by being *imperfect*, the stage is not in possession of an actor more capital in those parts; he is, perhaps, the only actor living who seems to have a just notion of Shakespeare's fools; there is a chasteness about his playing those characters, that form the best comment on that great poet, and illustrate the
true

true force of his pen; —add to all these, he dresses his parts with singular propriety, an article, however over-looked by performers in general, who are so ignorant as not to know the extent of their profession, yet absolutely necessary to be attended to by all those who would be eminent their respective walks; for the benefit of those, whowever, that are willing to be informed in this particular, we would recommend the perusal of *Ferraris de Re Vestiaria*, Potter's Greek, and Kennet's Roman Antiquities, as well as the History of the Persians, Indians, Chinese and Mexicans.



Mr. D Y E R.

THIS gentleman first obeyed the histrionic impulse in Ireland, the place of his nativity; a soil to which the English theatre has been ever much indebted for many of its principal performers; the names of Dogget, Wilkes, Quin, Barry, Sparks, and O'Brian, are recorded evidences of this assertion.

Mr. Dyer, though in his person and vivacity he is scarcely impaired, is one of the oldest performers on either theatre, — as his

appearance as an actor dates so far back as the year 1742, when he played the part of *Tattle*, in Mr. Congreve's admirable comedy of *Love for Love*, in some of the southern parts of Ireland. The writer of these memoirs saw him about two years after this period in England, and though it is now twenty-seven years ago, can scarcely perceive any difference in his appearance, manner, or style of acting; so that from these circumstances it may easily be inferred, Mr. Dyer not only wears well, but early established himself as a comedian of some repute.

On his arrival in England, he *soiled* for some time with some of the country companies; when weary of a life that has nothing to support it but the novelty of distress, he engaged at Covent-garden, and soon after appeared in the character of *Modely*, in the *Custom of the Manor*. His ease and spirits recommended him to a London audience, and under their protection he has ever since continued to please.

A review of both theatres, perhaps, does not exhibit a person of more prudence than Mr. Dyer; his merit early entitling him to a good salary, he constantly appropriated a part towards the chapter of incidents and old age: having by these means, in a course of years, saved above two thousand pounds, he deposited it into the hands of a *monster*, who had equal impudence to assume the name of a *man of fortune and friend*, as he had the art to obtain

obtain both these characters from the world, poor Dyer gave him credit for them as an individual; and under this confidence he fell a sacrifice, for the villain not only went off with the whole, but added another act of almost unprecedented robbery, by borrowing of him the last twenty guineas he had in the world, the morning before his departure.

To be deprived of the honest industry of youth on the verge of old age, is an 'overmatch for most men's philosophy: Dyer was not proof to it,—it for a while gloomed his mind, and soured his temper; time and reflexion, however, at last prevailed over this misfortune which the following accident did not a little contribute to establish.

Thinking that change of climate might contribute towards his cure, he made an engagement with Barry, then manager of Crow-street theatre, to play with him the ensuing summer at Dublin and Cork. Going down in the Chester stage, he could not help, every now and then, ruminating on the late event, which being observed by an officer who was in the coach, he took every method to amuse him, by singing, and telling a number of agreeable stories. Dyer at last, perceiving he could not be as good company as he would wish, apologized to the officer, by acquainting him with the particulars of his misfortune. But what was his surprise to hear on mentioning the name of his false friend, that this individual man had likewise robbed the officer of his

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his all, (being fifteen hundred pounds he had lodged in his hands for a captaincy) and that he was then with fifty guineas only in his pocket, going to push his interest (as his last resource) with the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who had been formerly his school-fellow. This superior philosophy of his fellow traveller, had a greater effect than volumes of spiritual advice: from this hour he resolved on forgetting his misfortune: and finding himself not yet too old to lay by for age, he adopted his former plan of œconomy, which, with the benefits he received from this story being known, has enabled him to compass, tho' in a smaller degree, his original intention.

As a comedian, Mr. Dyer is rather agreeable than capital; those parts he is in the possession of, such as Modely, Count Basset, Clodio, Tom in the *Conscious Lovers*, &c. he always supports with a spirit which would be sufficiently gratifying, if we would forget Mr. Woodward. His *forte*, we think, lies in footmen; there is a pertness in his face and manner, that answers to this cast of parts, which does not suit so well with those of gentlemen. As to his faults, they principally lie in a want of *variety* in his manner, and an uneven smartness in his voice. The correction of the former of these he has so little attended to, that he displays his whole stock of gestures so much in one part, as to be always under the necessity of borrowing from it in another.

another. This is a common fault likewise amongst painters; and though overlooked by the million, always hurts the eye of a connoisseur.



Mr. WOODWARD.

THERE are, perhaps, few instances where the designs of parents have counteracted the inclinations of their children, to more disadvantage, than in the hero of these memoirs. Had they effectually taken place in this instance, one of the best comedians perhaps the English stage has ever produced, would have been allotted the walk of obscurity, and Thalia sacrificed at the altar of Dulness one of her most favourite votaries.

Mr. Woodward is the son of a tallow-chandler, who lived in the Borough, and followed that business many years with reputation and character. This being his eldest son, he designed him for his profession; but nature and inclination both forbad it. Nor is it to be wondered at, that one possessed of such natural comic abilities, should relinquish such a profession for the stage: for though he might have literally *shone* in the business he was intended

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tended for, the *blaze* he has since exhibited in the theatrical hemisphere, must be confessed to have greatly eclipsed the feeble *lustre* of his family profession.

The incident that claims Mr. Woodward's first appearance on the stage, was in consequence of his going apprentice to the late Mr. Rich, the celebrated manager and Harlequin of Covent-garden theatre. Under this great master, he was instructed in the graces and agilities of pantomime, to which he added so considerable a knowledge of the sock, that when he had performed his indentures, he was engaged by him as a comedian at a very genteel salary; and from an attention to his profession, (for which this performer is exemplary) acquired in a little time so first-rate a reputation in that walk, that in the year 1747, Mr. Sheridan, manager of Smock-alley theatre, Dublin, engaged him, at no less a sum than 500 l. to perform the ensuing winter. In this engagement Mr. Woodward was articulated as a comedian and Harlequin, in both which departments he was extremely useful, and brought great receipts. In the former character he attacked Mr. Foote in his favourite piece of *Tea, or The Diversions of the Morning*, with such superior strength of humour, ridicule, and mimicry, as beat him out of the field; and in the latter, got up a new pantomime, (since altered to *Queen Mab*) which did his invention great credit, and his principal, considerable service.

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On Mr. Woodward's return to England, he was instantly engaged by Mr. Garrick, as necessary support to establish him in the management of Drury-lane, which he had at that time purchased in conjunction with Mr. Lacey; that great manager, knowing the acquisition he had got, never failed of directing such abilities in a proper line; and to this purpose, revived the comedy of Ben Johnson's *Every Man in his Humour*, with some alterations and an additional scene. If Mr. Woodward at this time wanted any thing to give the full display to his comic abilities, it was his appearance in Bobadil in this comedy; a character, though its manners are in a great measure obsolete, was rendered, from his judicious support of it, one of the chastest and most pleasing pieces of acting perhaps ever performed. The public were sensible of this, and gave it the most liberal applause: indeed it is to be doubted, if in any future period, this piece will ever appear to the advantage it then did, since exclusive of Mr. Woodward's abilities in Bobadil, Mr. Garrick in Kiteley, Shuter in Master Stephen, and Yates in Brainworm, there was scarce a character in the whole which was not supported with force. Such is the advantage, with respect to an audience, of the conduct of a theatre being lodged in the hands of a man, who as a manager, is able to distinguish the peculiar abilities of his performers.

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The increase of success we often find produces a desire of more. Mr. Woodward not content with a principal salary and benefit by which he had saved 5000*l.* and filling one of the first forums of Drury-lane theatre in the comic cast, but he must be a manager, *aut Cæsar aut nullus*; and for this purpose joined with Mr. Barry, who was at that time at Covent-garden theatre, to oppose Mr. Sheridan in Dublin. A new house was accordingly erected for them in Crowstreet, in that capital; and on Monday 22^d of October 1758, they opened with the comedy of *She would and She would not, or the Kind Impostor*, to almost empty benches. Indeed little more could be expected, as the names of all the performers of any consequence (except Mr. King's) were out of the bills. The second night was the *Beggar's Opera*, which was reported to be not more than 20*l.* These disappointments brought the managers forward much sooner than they intended; and when they performed, the people must have wanted taste indeed, not to have crowded thither.

Notwithstanding this management was attended with some success in the beginning, yet the long train of incumbrances they were clogged with, there not being audiences enough in Dublin to support two houses; and above all, the *incompatible* disposition of the managers, rendered both their profits inferior to their salaries in England: indeed

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this last circumstance alone would have been sufficient to overturn their scheme, abstracted from any other considerations. Barry was the Mark Anthony, in life, he represented on the stage—splendid, generous, and inconsiderate; whilst his partner, the reverse, looked at every thing through the medium of interest. The contrariety of tempers first produced remonstrance, from thence it blazed to news-paper quarrels, in which both parties made themselves ridiculous: however, the dispute at last, by the interposition of friends, terminated in an amicable manner, and Mr. Woodward withdrew his share, on getting security to be paid his outset in yearly installments.

Our hero now turned his face to London once more, after mispending his time, and impairing his fortune for the course of four years; but his own words in the following prologue best explain his situation, as well as contrition, which we shall make no apology for laying it before the public.

Pro-



PROLOGUE written and spoken by Mr. WOODWARD, on his first appearance at Covent-garden Theatre, in the Character of Marplot, after having been Manager at Dublin four years.

BEHOLD! the prodigal—return'd—quite tame—
 And (though you'll hardly think it) full of shame;
 Asham'd! so long t'have left my patrons here—
 On random schemes—the Lord knows what and where!
 —With piteous face (long stranger to a grin)
 Receive the penitent—and let him in!
 Forgive his errors—ope the friendly door;
 And then he your's (1)—and your's (2)—and your's (3)
 —as heretofore.
 —Ye Gods! what havock does ambition make!—
 Ambition! drove me to the grand mistake!
 Ambition! made me mad enough to roam!
 But now I feel (with joy) that home is home—
 —Faith! they put powder in my drink, d'ye see;
 Or else, by Pharaoh's foot, it could not be!
 Belike Queen Mab touch'd me (at full o'th' moon)
 With a Field-Marshal Manager's baton—
 And so I dreamt of riches, honour, pow'r—
 'Twas but a dream tho'—and that dream is o'er—
 —How happy now, I walk my native ground!
 Above—below—nay! faith—all round and round,

(1) (2) (3) Pit, boxes, and gallery.

I guess

*I guess some pleasures in your bosom burn,
To see the prodigal poor son return—*

—Perhaps, I'm vain, tho' and the case mistake—

No, no—yes—for old acquaintance sake,

Some gen'rous, hospitable, smiles you'll send—

Besides, I own my faults, and mean to mend—

—Oh, ho! they ring—how sweet that sound appears*

After an absence of four tedious years —

MARLOT, to night—so says the bill of fare†.

Now waits your pleasure with his usual air—

Oh! may I act the part still o'er and o'er,

But never be the Busy Body more.

In this theatre he ever since continued at the top of his profession as a comedian, till a late *fracas* with the acting manager of Covent-garden theatre, had for a time deprived that stage of so able and excellent a veteran. Who is to blame, we will not pretend to say, further than that the manager, who could lose so capital a performer, for a *pecadillo*, must be little instructed in his own interest,—less in the entertainment of the public.

As a comedian, we look upon Mr. Woodward as unequalled in his cast of parts; and however the satire of Churchill, and other critics, might have ridiculed his *croaking*, and placed his merit only in the *outrè*, yet we

* Music-bell.

† Pointing to the play-bill.

would

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would ask, Where is his equal in Bobadil, Petruchio, Younger Wou'dbe, Flash, the Apprentice, Fine Gentleman in *Letbe*, &c. and all those similar parts in comedy?

As a composer of pantomime, (considering the rage there is, and has been for these amusements from the present taste of the times) the stage is indebted to him for *three* of the best now in representation. Nor need the frequenters of the theatre be told these are—*Harlequin Fortunatus*, *Harlequin Dr. Faustus*, and *Queen Mab*. Entertainments where fable and conduct are judiciously express'd, and where a degree of rationality is blended with the powers of mechanism. His merit likewise as a principal actor in those amusements, is too considerable to be omitted here; we cannot therefore do it more to our satisfaction than in the compliments which Sir Richard Steele pays the celebrated Nicholini in his 115th Tatler, which will almost do for Mr. Woodward without a parody.

“ He sets off the character he bears in a
“ *pantomime*, by his action, as much as another would by his voice; every limb and
“ finger contributes to the part he acts, in
“ so much that a deaf man might go along
“ with him in the sense of it. There is
“ scarce a beautiful posture in an old statue
“ which he does not plant himself in, as
“ the different circumstances of the story
“ give occasion for it; and performs the
“ most ordinary action in a manner suitable
“ to

"to the representation of his character, even
 "to the giving of a letter, or dispatching a
 "message."



Mr. BENSLEY.

THOUGH we should apologize to the public for introducing this gentleman as a principal actor, or, indeed, any actor at all, yet the cast of parts he is in possession of, with the salary he is in receipt of, have so fortuitously for him, given him a stage consequence, that we should, perhaps, forfeit that impartiality we would wish to preserve, to omit him in these memoirs. Curiosity is equally excited by the anecdotes of situation and genius; and it is too often the case, that inferior establishments are as little regarded as inferior capacities.

Mr. Bensley originally bore a commission in the Marine Society; when, after escaping many accidents to which a military life is subject, was on the conclusion of the last peace (to use the politer expression of the French) *reformed*; and, like Col. Standard in the play, "Left like his fellow sheep to graze upon the first common." For a while, the

the prospect of another war supported his spirits; or, at least, he prevailed upon himself to be so supported, which species of false philosophy is often laid hold of by persons in similar circumstances, ignorant of what to do; however, a few years waked him from the dream, and finding that nothing of this nature was likely to happen, he turned his thoughts to the stage; a spot, which in the juvenile parts of his life, he entertained a favourable opinion of, and where now the solicitations of his circumstances rendered him more eligible: but here some embarrassments offered themselves: his half-pay was not only to be given up, which was a *certainty*, whereas it was *uncertain* how he should succeed. Another circumstance weighed still stronger, which was the disgrace he would throw on his present profession, by entering into another, which the world has almost unanimously stamped with disrepute. The more he turned the things in his mind, the more he was undecided what to do; till at last, finding he must speedily decide on something, the stage carried its voice; and procuring letters of strong recommendation to Mr. Garrick, he was taken into the service of the Drury-lane company.

The *gentle* Cautherly, and Mr. Bensley started the same winter, (1765) the former in *G. Barnwell*, the latter in *Pierre*: the constitutional insipidity of Cautherly had like to have damn'd him the first winter, did not

THEATRICAL BIOGRAPHY. 61

the almost *paternal* influence of Mr. Garrick rescue him from such a censure, by laying him up, after the first night, for the remainder of the season. But Bensley's former situation, which had been respectable, and the circumstances of his being necessitated to the stage, for bread, not only encouraged his friends, and brothers of the blade, to countenance him, but engaged the general attention of the public in his favour. He! possessed other advantages which should not be omitted, as they apply to his industry and attention; having a tolerable education, with a desire to succeed in his profession, he studied his parts with unremitting diligence; hence he, at least, became perfect in all his parts, a quality very necessary in the most veteran performers, but much more so in a young one, unacquainted with the habits, and the various minutiae of the stage.

In the character, therefore, of a player, whose pretensions to fame were not as yet established, Bensley continued for two seasons; sometimes in the possession of tolerable parts, and never much in the disapprobations of the public, till the theatrical revolution in 1768, when the late Mr. Powell, in conjunction with Mr. Colman, &c. became patentees of Covent-garden theatre; an intimacy which subsisted, from his first commencement on the stage, between him and Powell, induced the latter to take him with him to Covent-garden, where the scarcity of tragedians at that house, together

together with Powell's warmth of friendship (which in justice to his memory none possessed in a greater degree) made him fix his friend's salary at a very considerable advance; this with the advantages of playing most of the second characters in tragedy with Powell settled his reputation as an actor with the good of the audience, who catch every information from appearance, and regulate their criticism from play-hills, more than from the principles of Longinus.

The death of his friend Powell, which happened soon after his being fixed at Covent Garden, rather enlarged than affected his stage consequence, as by the succeeding death of Holland at the other house, there was a dearth of actors in their walks, which rendered a performer that was received with any degree of consequence by the public, useful. This accident, in a great measure, has done for Bensley, what abilities sometimes will fail in; he has good sense, however, sufficient to secure this footing, by bestowing every attention he is master of, in the cultivation of his profession, and thereby gaining the indulgence of the public, and the confidence of the managers.

We are sorry to observe, that we find almost impossible to conclude the memoirs of any of our stage characters, without touching on their gallantry; from the generality of the practice, it is become a projectile feature of the histrionic character; and a player without

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his amour, is more seldom known than a general without his victory. In the present instance, one would imagine nature had dealt with him in so niggardly a manner, as to prevent his engaging in any female connexion, but those that are made in open market: Truly has the God of Love been decyphered blind, when he often directs his favourite votaries to such objects as disgrace his administration; as the history, however, of this gentleman's amours has been already necessarily interwoven in the memoirs of Mrs. Mattocks, of the same house, we shall omit the repetition here, referring such of our readers as want to have their memories brushed up, to the life of that Lady.

We have already set out with observing, in the beginning of this paper, that Mr. Bensley is, in our opinion, *no actor at all*; to preserve candour in these strictures, we must still repeat the assertion; he has neither *face, voice, nor manner*, that can any way entitle him to this epithet; there is a horror in the *first*, a sepulchral gravity in the *second*, and a mechanism in the *third*, that must always render him disgusting to those few who are judges of the natural requisites of theatric powers. His principal merit lies in his general knowledge of the dramatic poets, — and his being always perfect, which prevent those natural defects from appearing so obvious as they otherwise would; indeed such

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qualities are alone sufficient to disarm the rage of criticism, as they pronounce a person to be as good an actor as nature will admit.



Mr. MATTOCKS.

THOUGH as an actor, Mr. Mattocks has a very little title to public favour, as singer he claims a very respectable notice; qualification, however, in our opinion, inferior to the former, yet no ways less beneficial to the possessor, nor entertaining to the public. Instances of this abound in both theatres particularly in the Opera House, where the salary of a mere vocal performer often exceeds, by far, the emoluments and appendages of the professors of colleges.

This gentleman is a veteran of Covent-garden stage, though we can neither particularly ascertain the period of his commencement, or the part he first appeared in: indeed the knowledge of either is immaterial, except when it leads to mark the progressive improvement of capital actors; then curiosity is somewhat awakened, and the mind grows avaricious in enquiring how far it was from nature, accident or industry, the maturity of such powers first expanded

expanded. Thus much, however, we can venture to assert, that the first countenance he got, was from his merit as a singer, which being universally applauded, induced the managers to throw him into such parts, where acting is principally supported by the voice. In this he was successful; the harmony of the one compensated for the want of the other; and, by a mixed applause that can't be so well separated by the gross of an audience, he rose to reputation. What still forwarded this, was the appearance of Mr. Bickerstaff's operas, of *Love in a Village*, and the *Maid of the Mill*; the very great success of those pieces, and the taste they disseminated thro' the town for this species of amusement, called for such a performer as Mattocks to execute; he was accordingly cast for the principal parts, where his voice, and even his *style* of acting, gave him a preference, with the generality of his audience, to the united warblers of Italy or France.

From this favourable point of situation, Mr. Mattocks, as a son of the stage (and consequently not possessed of Joseph's continency) could not resist the private favourable reception he met with from the fairer part of his auditory. In this promiscuous pursuit, he was singled out by a veteran Lady of family and fortune, who idly squandered away the one, and disgraced the other, to enlarge the circle of her ungovernable pleasures: whether Mattocks had originally any real inducement

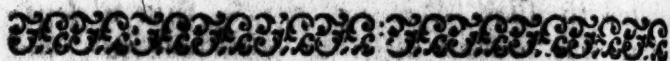
to this connexion, beside interest, it is hard to determine; however, it at last ended with ruin and infamy on the side of the Lady, who still lives rather to repent of being deprived of the means of her pleasure, than of her former imprudence.

Soon after this connexion was dissolved, he paid honourable addresses to Miss Hallam, daughter to a veteran performer of the same house, who was just beginning to be noticed by the public as a rising, meritorious actress, and agreeable singer. Though this courtship was not agreeable to the young Lady's family, the inclinations of the young couple were too much in unison to be thwarted; taking, therefore, a trip to France, under pretence of spending the vacation at Easter in the country, they returned *one flesh*, and soon after all parties were reconciled.

A match thus formed on affection, and fed by interest, (as Mrs. Mattocks had a very good salary in the theatre) one would think was sufficiently secured to insure permanency; but such is the fluctuation of desire, revenge, novelty, or whatever colourable epithet female inconstancy is pleased to christen it by, the lady (as report has spread it) forgot her matrimonial promises, and shared her affections with a performer of the same house; one, who, whatever *private* qualifications he might possess, could by no means stand as a competitor with her husband, either for person, or *exterior* accomplishments: for a while he talk-

ed loudly of a divorce, and when endeavoured to be appeased by the interposition of friends, pointed to such *damning proofs*, that a separation was looked upon as unavoidable; but all of a sudden, *prudence* began to reassume her influence; and doubting both the powers of his *eyes* and *ears*, he very *modishly* took his wife's word for the contrary, and they have ever since lived a perfect pattern of conjugal fidelity.

As an actor, whatever reputation Mr. Mattocks may be in with the public, as impartial critics we must assert, he has not the least glimmering of *positive* merit; whatever he possesses is negative, where, though he offends from his *stiffness* and *want of feeling*, yet he never rouses your absolute disgust; his voice in this is his protection, which we must allow to be clear, soft, melodious and expressive; and did he possess more compass, it probably would be the first on any stage. His figure, though well proportioned, likewise wants not only that animation, which is necessary to inspire the several characters he performs in, but that vigour and manliness which his sex demands, as from his present appearance, joined with the extreme softness of his voice, we are often led to imagine, that we are listening to the notes of a *Castrato*, than to those of a British singer.



Mr. CLARK.

VARIOUS have been the transitions from the counting-house to the stage, occasioned by that intoxication which is partly supported by the numerous spouting-clubs that infest this metropolis, as well as the too frequent intercourse which our merchants clerks have with the theatres : there is something in the pomp and pageantry of the stage, that flatter the generality of young minds, who, ambitious at grasping at exalted characters, would rather possess them but in *fiction*, than be content with an inferior situation.

What particular inducements Mr. Clark might have for the stage, we don't know ; his outset in life was with a respectable merchant in the city, where he was fixed at a very genteel salary, and every day rising in the esteem and confidence of his principal. Notwithstanding these prospects, he abandoned them on a sudden ; and carrying with him some strong recommendations to the managers of Covent-garden theatre, he was very readily accepted of, and soon after made his appearance on that stage. Tho' his first character

was

was respectable, yet not being possessed of those talents that captivate at first sight, he met with but indifferent success; time and experience, however, pointed out both to himself, and the managers, his proper walk, and being always studious to improve in it, he has cultivated it with such industry, as to be considered, at present, as a very useful, judicious, respectable actor.

Previous to his going on the stage, Mr. Clark married the daughter of a general officer, a Lady possessed of many useful and ornamental virtues; by her he has had six or seven children, all of whom he has educated with a tenderness and attention that deserve to be mentioned with a particular compliment, when it is considered he is a player; indeed his general life and conversation have been ever very different from the stage examples that surround him, for whether from the consideration of the annual increase of his family, or the habits of industry he acquired in the early parts of his life, he seems to have considered the stage as a profession, from which he is to derive reputation and support; not as a sanction (which is too generally misrepresented) to follow the bent of his passions with impunity. What has assisted him in these laudable exertions, is his having purchased a third share of the play-house in Bristol, being one of the original proprietors of that house in the year

1766, in conjunction with Mr. Arthur, and the late Mr. Powel. The managers there having always two benefits in the season, and Mr. Clark being universally liked by that sober, industrious people, they have always turned out as very considerable appendages to his emoluments in town.

From this still point of view, we can expect little of that intrigue or adventure, which so occasionally mix in the lives of the generality of players: not to leave curiosity, however, totally unfed, we shall subjoin an anecdote of Mr. Clark, which, as it is quite incidental to his memoirs, so we hope it will be equally entertaining. When Churchill first published his *Rosciad*, it being sent into the world anonymously, those performers who thought they were rather roughly handled by that ingenious satirist, vowed vengeance on the author, if ever he should have temerity enough to publish his name; Churchill hearing of this, immediately left orders with his publisher, to put his name at full in the next edition, which he accordingly did, and the day after, Churchill went to the Bedford coffee-house, where he was sure of meeting some of his exasperated adversaries; spying a groupe of them at the lower end of the room, he boldly marched up, and drawing off his gloves with great composure, called for a dish of coffee and the *Rosciad*, in a tone of voice that by no means indicated the least spark of apprehension. This menace, however,

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THEATRICAL BIOGRAPHY. 71

produced no other effect for the present, than their judiciously moving off, one by one, till they left the box entirely to himself. This anecdote, of course, immediately got footing amongst the theatrical people, and the conduct of the pusillanimous party much laughed at and despised by several buskined heroes of the Green Room, who bragged they only wished for an opportunity to repair the honour of their fraternity, by exhibiting their own valour. It happened some time after this, Churchill was in a room at the Rose Tavern, where there were no other company but Mr. Clark and Mr. Yates, and talking over the above circumstance in a ridiculous light, a quarrel ensued between him and Yates, which the latter was for deciding immediately in the Dutch fashion (*snick-a-jnee*;) Churchill for a while thinking this rather too desperate, yet, lest his honour should suffer, at length agreed, and each seized a case-knife for the purpose; but the comedian's prudence at that moment recurring, put it off for the present, and saying he should soon hear from him, left the room. Mr. Clark, upon this, began commenting on the conduct of both parties, and remarked to Churchill, it was well for him he did not attempt treating him in that manner; "And what would you have done if I had, good Sir?" replied the bard in an ironical manner. "Put you to death, by G——d," says the other. Churchill, instead of replying, immediately run up to him, begged the

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honour of his acquaintance, and swore he was the only actor of *spirit* he met with in either house.

In deciding on the theatrical abilities of this performer, we think when he is confined to his natural walk of parts, the venerable or rough-hewn parts of tragedy, such as Sciolto, Abudah, Kent, or Hotspur, he possesses very respectable merit; there is a manliness in his form, and a deepness in his voice, that are well suited to such characters, and it is with the greatest disgust, we sometimes see this *manly* actor degraded in several of the *slimsey* parts of Mrs. Centlivre's comedies. This manner of *casting* shews great neglect or ignorance in the prompter, who is usually the theatrical prime minister; it puts one in mind of those strange reverses of character that are sometimes presented us in history, and real life, such as Domitian catching flies, or Grown Gentlemen learning to dance.

HAY

HAY-MARKET.

Mrs. GARDNER.

IT is one of the misfortunes of preceptorship, that it cannot always communicate the force of its abilities to its pupils: this sometimes happens from a want of method in the preceptor to inculcate his lessons properly, but oftener from a want of natural capacity in the pupil, who cannot catch that *inexpressible something*, which baffles every mode of instruction, and which seizes the mind on a sudden, like the lightning's flash, scorning the aids of lecture and imitation.

None, perhaps, has been a greater instance of the force of this hypothesis, than the lady who titles these memoirs: had she been under the hands of any other manager, who would have aided nature by instruction, she
has

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has spirit and sensibility about her sufficient to arrive at any theatrical honours; but being originally under the care of Mr. Foote, she has caught a good deal of his stile of acting, without the *whole* of his *peculiarity*, which, abstracted from the difference of sexes, would not be agreeable in any other actor without it.

This lady's maiden name was Cheyney; and the part that claims her first appearance on the stage, is Mrs. Mechlin, in Foote's *Commissary*, being the original performer in that comedy; her face and person, which are both very agreeable, strongly recommended her to the audience in general, her spirit and sensibility to the critics; and though the part was not so favourable for a young performer, she discovered on this night the stamina of a good actress, and the public formed no inconsiderable expectations from so many budding accomplishments.

From being a favourite with the town, she soon became the heroine of the Haymarket theatre; and being at a good salary, and what the French call *en bon point*, in this double capacity she attracted the notice of Mr. Gardner, of Covent-garden theatre, who likewise having the advantages of a good person, and *cavalier* address, soon succeeded in his honourable intentions.

This

THEATRICAL BIOGRAPHY. 75

This marriage produced no other consequences than the usual honey-moon of love, and several children. Gardner loved *variety*, in every sense of that fashionable word; and as his wife had lost her's (in his eyes) after the first month, he sought for it abroad. As these pursuits generally occupy so much of a man's mind, as "to give his wife as little of his pay as his company;" poor Mrs. Gardner exactly fell under Dryden's humorous description of this state;

And whilst abroad so prodigal the dolt is,
Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.

These irregularities so soon after marriage, particularly practised on a woman of youth, beauty, and spirit, would have induced many a one to make reprisals; more particularly in a theatre, where vice, from the general example, loses all its horror, and where even *adultery* scarcely bears a harsher epithet than *complaisance*; but Mrs. Gardner had virtue enough to think otherwise; she loved her husband from principle, and therefore thought him worth reclaiming; she had likewise good sense enough to hit on the proper methods,—by indulging him without schooling, and doubling her economical attention to a rising family.

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ly. Surely when a woman in the course of time, fails after these attempts, the man must be very unworthy either the name of *friend* or *husband*.

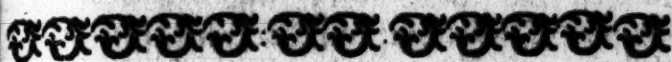
As an actress, we have before observed, was it not her early misfortune to have fallen under Foote's management, it is more than probable, at this day, she would have been capital; but her getting into a number of *outré* characters, which his pieces abound with, and copying his manner, her voice has greatly lost its natural softness, her person its natural grace. However, though Foote has thus spoiled her as a general actress, she has particular merit in most of his pieces; and it would be doing her great injustice not to pronounce her the female leader of his histrionic band.

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Mrs. J E W E L L.

IT is the misfortune of too many professions, that they abound with votaries, undirected by genius or fancy, and who become members of such and such societies, merely because some accidental circumstances have contributed to that event. Dr. Young, in one of his satires, ridicules this folly in the following couplet, with respect to scribblers :

Some write, because their fathers often writ,
And prove themselves thus *bastards* by their wit.

Had not a circumstance of this nature directed the heroine of this page to the stage, she probably would, to this hour, be unknown in dramatic annals.

This Lady's maiden name was Edwards : she was originally servant to our English Aristophanes, where, in this capacity, she continued many years, aspiring to no greater honours than the arrangement of her master's house and table. Nature, however,

to

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so far qualified her for public entertainment, as to bestow on her a good voice, which she took every opportunity to improve, if constant practice, without the assistance of art, may be allowed to constitute that phrase.

It was in one of these warbling moods she first captivated her master's ear, which instantly suggested to him (than whom none can be kinder to his domestics) the idea of her going on the stage. He communicated to her his assistance, which was ambitiously and thankfully accepted. Preparatory steps were therefore taken; a dancing and music master immediately attended, and though *old habits* are somewhat stubborn, by the help of her preceptors, and the assistance of her own genius, she could, in a few months, slide upon the stage with a tolerable grace, and manage the compass of her voice with no inconsiderable share of judgment.

Thus *built* for the stage, she was launched out in Cibber's ballad farce of *Damon and Phillida*; where, in the part of Phillida, from the aid of dress, the advantages of a pretty face, and pleasing voice, she made a very decent first appearance. She continued for two seasons, in this under-capacity, the heroine of farces and interludes, till such time as she had acquired some *study*, and was enabled to appear in characters of more consequence.

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During this interval, the sly God of Love sent one of his keenest arrows from her eyes, to the heart of the treasurer of the Hay-market theatre. In paying her salary, she had taken his heart in exchange: he told her so, who, like a generous heroine, offered to give it back with her own as interest. These terms were joyfully accepted, and Hymen lighted his brightest torch on the sealing of the bargain.

The ceremonies of this union were scarcely over, when they reached the ears of Aristophanes, who lost his usual temper on this occasion, and, for a while, gave a truce to *bon mot* and *repartee*. Jewell was not only his prime minister, but his *favourite* and companion; and, as it is said, often *amused* him in the hour of theatrical concern. — By this alliance he was, in some respect deprived of her *services*, he therefore dismissed him his employment, parodying the words of Othello to Cassio; “Jewell, though I *love* thee, never more be *officer* of mine.”

However we may laugh at old habits, the shaking them off are painful. A celebrated French author tells us, the tearing up an old post before his door, that was really a nuisance, hurt him for some time. Aristophanes found this frailty as sore as any body: these two faithful servants had long known his temper, and accommodated themselves to all its dispositions. In short, they
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were his *crutch* and *wooden-leg*, and they were equally as necessary to be *depended on*; he therefore, after a short, but painful absence, recalled them to his service, where a continuance of their assiduities to please him, have since procured them an additional share of his confidence and esteem.

Mrs. Jewell has since been advanced by the manager to some stage consequence;—but not having a mind early trained to the sentiments of authors, her action, often, betrays her error. Many other requisites are necessary beside a *bawling monotony*, and *sawing of the air*, to constitute either sprightly, or sentimental comedy. In farces, and some still parts of acting, where her voice may be occasionally introduced, she will, however, be found useful; and if she would consider these bounds as lines, her genius will not permit her to pass, she will acquire more reputation than an attempt to climb, where her fall will be as inevitable as ridiculous.

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Mrs. D I D I E R.

IT should be the most pleasing part of biographical employment, to place the merits of characters in that point of view, which should reflect the justest light on their actions. Under the influence of the propriety of this measure, we are happy in having found, in these degenerate days, *even in a theatre*, a matrimonial fair one, whose *public* conduct demands encouragement, — whose *private* inculcates the lesson of example.

This Lady is daughter to a person of very good character and property in Wales, and is sister to Mr. Du Bellamy of Covent-garden theatre. Though we do not know with precision, what were her inducements to the stage, we think ourselves justified, in supposing them to be that agreeableness of voice, and vivacity of temper, which have been ever so congenial to her. But notwithstanding the stage presented itself to her as the proper bank to deposit such qualities in, she was desirous of trying them in a foreign

foreign kingdom, where, if fortunate, she might reap the full rewards of her success; if otherwise, she would be the better able to cover her disguise. Established in these notions, she took a French leave of her family, and arriving in Ireland just about the time Mr. Bickerstaff's *Love in a Village* came out, she made her first appearance in Madge, in that opera, and during the long and uninterrupted success of that piece, in which Miss Catley played Rosetta, Mrs. Didier came off with no inconsiderable share of secondary applause.

It was during her situation here, that she got acquainted with Mr. Didier, who was considered as a very decent, improving actor in that theatre; the vivacity of their tempers, and a mutuality of inclinations, soon pointed out a reciprocal affection, which not long after terminated in a marriage; and it would be omitting an opportunity of doing justice to her character not to say, that she has, in the situation of a *wife*, (though an *actress*) supported herself with a reputation very unusual to that rank of life.

Soon after their marriage, they quitted Ireland, and went to Edinburgh, where they were received in their public characters with reputation, and their private with particular respect: it is a very commendable feature in the Scotch character, that they pay every attention to a *moral* character, particularly when it is attended with any degree of reputation

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putation in profession. Mrs. Didier and her husband both felt the effects of this national indulgence, being received with that respect which becomes the greater compliment from a consciousness of having deserved it. — A private quarrel, however, with one of the actors and the collegians, involved the whole company in such difficulties, that, after having in vain attempted to keep their ground, they were at last obliged to disembody. In this general reform, Mrs. Didier and her husband went to Liverpool, and afterwards to Bath; in both of which places she was a constant favourite of the audience, as well for her uncommon assiduity in her profession, as that vivacity and spirit which so peculiarly mark her performances.

Her engagement with Mr. Foote, the beginning of the last season, brought her first to this capital, where she has for her standing, and cast of parts, been tolerably received. As a singer, though destitute of those shakes that constitute a first-rate voice, she is pleasing both from her manner and ear; particularly in ballad tunes, that require no extraordinary compass. Her merit as an actress, may be laid down pretty nearly on the same scale; and were her views in low comedy a little more extended, which a short acquaintance with either of the winter theatres would readily accomplish, she bids fair for being capital in that walk.

Mr.



Mr. F O O T E.

AN *author, actor, and companion*, of Mr. Foote's unrivalled reputation, makes it difficult for a biographer to place the whole of each in one view. His *bon mots* alone (admitting they could be all compiled) would be too numerous for a design like this. We shall therefore confine ourselves in these memoirs, to those projectile parts of the portrait that more immediately mark the likeness, leaving the inside touches to be filled up by the succeeding painters of his history at large.

This laughing author was born at Truro in Cornwall. His father was member of parliament for Tiverton in Devonshire; and his mother, being heiress of the *Dineley* and *Goodere* families, (in consequence of an unhappy and fatal quarrel between the two brothers) came into the possession of five thousand pounds a year. Foote received the rudiments of his education at Worcester college (which owed its foundation to a near relation of his own;) from

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from thence he removed to the Temple, being designed for the study of the law; where, 'tis more than probable, his great oratorical talents, and powers of mimicry, would have shewn themselves in a very conspicuous manner, had not the general dryness of that study clashed with his natural vivacity of temper, and prompted him to look forward to the stage as a more eligible resource to favour his inclination and fortune.

Perhaps there never was an actor whose genius was more duped by his inclination, than Foote's was on his outset as a player: We need enter into no further proof of this, than barely mentioning *Othello* as the part he chose to make his appearance in; he had sense, however, to benefit by his mistake; for soon after we find him not only abandoning tragedy, (to whom Nature designed him a sworn foe) but striking out into a new and untrodden path, in which he, at once, hit off the tone of his genius, afforded entertainment to the public, and emolument to himself. This was by taking on himself the double character of *author* and *performer*; in which light, in 1747, he opened the Little Theatre, in the Haymarket, with a dramatic piece of his own writing, called *The Diversions of the Morning*.

This piece consisted of nothing more than the introduction of several well-known characters in real life, whose manner of conversation and expression this author had very happily hit in the diction of his drama, and still
more

more happily represented on the stage, by an exact imitation, not only of the manner and tone of voice, but even of the very person of those whom he intended to take off. Amongst these characters, there was a certain physician, who was much better known from the oddity and singularity of his appearance and conversation, than from his eminence in his profession. The celebrated Chevalier Taylor, the oculist, (who was at that time in the meridian of his popularity) was also another object; and in the latter part of the piece, under the character of a Theatrical Director, he took off, with great humour and accuracy, the several styles of acting of the principal performers of both theatres.

This performance at first met with some little opposition from the civil magistrates of Westminster, under the sanction of the act of parliament for limiting the number of play-houses; but the author being patronized by many of the principal nobility and others, this opposition was over-ruled, and with the alteration of the title of his piece to that of *Mr. Foote's giving Tea to his Friends*, he proceeded without further molestation, and represented it through a run of upwards of forty mornings, to crowded and splendid audiences.

The ensuing season he produced another piece of the same kind, which he called *An Auction of Pictures*. In this he introduced several new characters, all, however, popular ones, and extremely well known, particularly

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Mr. Thomas de Veil, then the acting Justice of Peace for Westminster; Mr. Cock, the celebrated auctioneer; and the equally famous Orator Henley.

Neither of the above-mentioned pieces have yet appeared in print, nor would they, perhaps, give any great pleasure in the closet; consisting principally of characters, whose peculiar singularities could never be perfectly represented on paper, they might probably appear flat, when divested of that *strong colouring* and *projection*, which he gave them in his *personal* representation.

From the success of his talents in this way, he proceeded to pieces of somewhat more regularity, and the ensuing season produced his *Knights*, which, though the plot and character seemed less *personal*, yet it was apparent he kept some personage strongly in his eye, and the town took upon themselves to associate the character, where the resemblance seemed most striking.

It would really be superfluous in this place to enumerate the respective pieces he has since written and performed; let it here suffice to observe, that he has, ever since his striking out this particular line, continued to entertain the public, by, *annually*, selecting for their entertainment, such characters, whether *general*, or, *individual*, as seem most likely to raise the laugh, and answer the end of dramatic satire. We shall, therefore, close this account with some general observations on his merit as an author and actor.

Mr. Foote's dramatic works are all to be ranked amongst the *petit pieces* of the theatre, as he has not hitherto attempted any thing which has reached to the bulk of the more perfect drama. In the execution of them, they are sometimes loose, negligent, and unfinished, seeming rather to be the hasty productions of a man of genius, (whose Pegasus, though endued with fire, had no inclination for fatigue) than the finishings of an accurate dramatist; yet, with all these little deficiencies, they contain strong marks of comedy, and exhibit more character than the writings of any of his contemporaries. His merit as an actor seems closely allied with that of his being an author, as he possesses those powers of representation, that shew his pieces in the most favourable light; we therefore cannot better express our sense of his *compound* abilities, than by saying, though he is no *history painter*, he has an excellent knack at *sketching* modern portraits with a Dutch pencil.

Mr.



Mr. W E S T O N.

DISTINGUISHED abilities sometimes, like useful arts, are brought to light from the veriest accident. It was owing to the carelessness of a Florentine goldsmith, in the 15th century, that we are indebted for the invention of engraving; a discovery that has much enlarged the circle of polite arts, by diffusing the beauties of the greatest masters, and enabling us to become possessed of those elegant designs, which would otherwise be reserved for the cabinets of princes; and in all probability, had not such an author as Foote been cotemporary with Weston, we should at this hour stand in need of an actor of the most distinguished comic abilities.

This son of *low humour*, like the famous tragedian Betterton, is the offspring of one of the domestics of the royal kitchen, his father being under-cook to his late Majesty George the Second. This place being lucrative, he designed for his son, depending on his interest to obtain it for him, when he should be capable; but a turn for dissipation (which he seems still to continue, though it has wasted him

almost to the size of a walking cane) induced him to turn his back on the culinary profession of his ancestors, and commence gentleman at large.

His first outset on the stage was in some of the country companies, where his round of parts were of that cast, as to leave the character he first appeared in undiscoverable to this hour. How long he continued here, is likewise involved in the same obscurity; however, it could not be very long, from a computation of his first commencement on the stage, as in the year 1762 he took an excursion to Ireland, and landing at Cork, engaged with Mr. Barry, manager of both that and the Dublin company, at a very inferior salary.

Though Weston chose his walk in comedy, and had originally started in that line, it was of that particular species which was by no means calculated to shew the force of his acting. *Insipid footmen*, and *secondary gentlemen*, in some bad farces, seemed to form the whole of his cast; nor do we ever remember to have seen him in any character, where he discovered scarcely any glimmering of the *vis comica*, except in the *Drunken Man* in *Lethe*, and even in this his merit must be taken separately.

Having some disagreement with Mr. Barry, when he went up to Dublin, he enlisted under Mossop, who, at that time, was in strong opposition to the other theatre, yet here his powers continued under a wrong direction; for

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for though he changed principals, his acting was nearly the same, and whenever his name was mentioned in the play-bills, it was amongst the *lumber* troops of the company. However, tho' his performance did not distinguish him amongst the Hibernian critics, his *gallantries* (if a dishonourable abuse of the confidence of an unsuspecting woman deserves that title) did amongst the women; for having ingratiated himself into the affections of a jeweller's daughter of reputation in Dublin, under a promise of reciprocal affection, he deceived her, and left her in the hour of *insult, danger, and distress*.

On his arrival in London, Foote engaged him at the Hay-market for the ensuing summer. This great comic actor always having but *few hands*, they are often under a necessity of going through a variety of business. In this extension of parts, he discovered a humour about Weston, that he thought worth cultivating; accordingly, he brought him out the next year in *Transfer* in the *Minor*, which he wrote on purpose for him. Weston's abilities did not deceive him. In this character he threw out such original strokes of nature, as gave the town the strongest hopes of receiving a very great acquisition to the stage.

His appearance soon after in the *Orators*, convinced the public they were not mistaken; but what established his abilities beyond a doubt, was his *Jerry Sneak* in the *Mayor of Garrat*; a piece of natural acting, we may safely pronounce, all may despair of seeing equally performed, except by the original.

From all the testimonies that can be now gathered of the celebrated Nokes, (the great comedian of Betterton's day) his line of acting seems to be most parallel to Weston's; nor do we think we in the least degrade that great comic support of the last century by the comparison. To analyse Weston's particular excellence in comedy, it may be comprehended in one article, *viz.* A plain and obvious simplicity of nature, which seems so entirely his own, that from seeing him on the stage, you are led to imagine it is no more than his usual conversation. In those ludicrous distresses, which by the laws of comedy, Folly is often involved in, imagination cannot form a more natural mixture of pusillanimity and consternation, than Weston shews in *Abel Drugger*, on the breaking of the phial. Other actors would have only made you laugh under the same circumstance, but his powers do more, they oblige you to pity him; nor is there a moment, whilst he is on the stage in this character, in which you do not forget it is *fictitious*.

In a word, we are tempted to conclude Weston's eulogium as a comediam, by parodying what Mark Anthony says of Brutus as a hero.

His life is laughter, and the *ludicrous*
So mixt in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world—*this is an actor.*

Mr.



Mr. J. AICKIN.

THERE is on the stage dramatic, as on the great stage of the world, a number of *useful* people, who, without any uncommon, or projectile qualifications, possess those happy *agréments*, as support their characters with ease and propriety; and who, though their talents are not calculated to call up the thunder of applause, are entitled to the silent approbation of the more selected judges. Amongst this number we place Mr. Aickin, who, though incapable of reaching the limits of theatrical perfection, is always sure to please, from his easy manner and judicious intelligence of his author.

This gentleman was born in Ireland, and bred to the weaving business, which, we believe, he followed, for some time, in the capital of that kingdom. His inclinations not corresponding with trade, accounts very well why he should not succeed in it. The principles of business require as nice an attention as the principles of mechanics; and the person who is inattentive to the smallest movements in either, will be greatly disappointed if he expects the usual operations.

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Why the stage was the profession he threw his eyes on, when disengaged from trade, or when, or in what character he first appeared, is, perhaps, justly consigned to biographical oblivion. Indeed, most appearances would do little injury to the performers to undergo the same fate; for let a person's talents be never so distinguishable, there is a certain diffidence and want of manner, that glooms their lustre; and the most you can say is, that you can discover some traces, that time, and acquaintance with the stage, may lead to perfection.

When Mr. Aickin had sufficiently tried his talents in Ireland, he embarked for Scotland, and by degrees grew so great a favourite with the people of that kingdom, from his merit as an actor, and his sensible deportment in private life, that he became, on the defection of Mr. Lee, the hero of the Edinburgh company, and played most of the capital parts in tragedy and comedy, with very great satisfaction.

At this time there happened to belong to the company a player, whose name was Stayley, and who formerly belonged to the theatre in Smock-alley, Dublin, under the management of Mr. Sheridan. Like many more in the world, Stayley over-rated his own abilities, and depending on his interest with the town, demanded such an increase of salary, that the persons who managed for the company were obliged to discharge him. In his

his temper he was one of those restless, turbulent spirits, that felt thorns in every situation; and rather than not *oppose*, he would rather not *exist*. Bred an academic, he had some *smattering* of books; and early dabbling with the Muses, he rhymed lines out of number, without the least gleam of fancy or imagination.

With these outside qualifications, and a very imposing, specious behaviour, he ingratiated himself so far into the esteem of the young collegians at Edinburgh, and represented his case in such favourable terms for himself, and such ungenerous ones for the company, that they determined to force the managers to a compliance. The managers, hearing of this, represented the case in a public advertisement, signed with all their names: however, this would not do. The next night the pit was totally invested with these sons of Alma Mater, who, with one voice, on the rising of the curtain, demanded, "Why Mr. Stayley was not engaged?" And particularly called for the appearance of Mr. James Aickin, who, as the principal performer, was the first name in the advertisement. After his name had been riotously called upon several times, he came forward dressed for Romeo, (the character he was preparing to play) and in the most conciliating terms, attempted to explain the reasonableness of his fellow comedian's behaviour; but all in vain, the cry of the pit

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was, "Damn yore saul, mon, done on your
"marrow-bones, and ask pardon of a Brat-
"tish audience." So servile a concession,
for only the imputation of an offence, he
thought below the dignity of human nature;
and, after expostulating for some time in
vain, during which he was several times
thrown at from the pit, he came forwards
and expressed himself to the following pur-
port:

"Gentlemen,

"I know of no offence either my fellow
"performers or I have been guilty of,
"which, if you would listen to me, I
"should be able to explain to you. As to
"going on my knees, it is what I never
"will do, but to God and my King. If
"any gentleman insists on it, he must first
"rip from me this heart, which inspires
"this declaration."

He had no sooner concluded, than the stage
was crowded with collegians, who, with
their swords drawn, searched every corner of
the house, for the *assuming play actor*, but in
vain. Observing their motions, he had time
to escape out of a back window, which led
into the street. Disappointed in their search,
they turned their revenge on the scenery, of
which they soon gave a good account. They
next attempted the Green Room, which,
as they could not so easily force, they had
recourse

recourse to firing, and, with this intent, run a lighted torch (which providentially had not the designed effect) under the door. Amongst this groupe of young heroes, was the second son of Lord Bute, who had even a narrower escape than his father, when struck at with a *bludgeon*, by the falling in of two side wings, of which he himself cut the ligatures.

The theatre thus demolished, the company were unavoidably obliged to separate for the season, and that too at a period when the country was covered with frost; in consequence of which, many who had families were near perishing. In this dilemma Mr. Aickin set forward for London, despairing of ever reconciling himself upon terms in the least agreeable, and after some time got an engagement at Drury-lane theatre.

It is in the profession of the stage, what it is in many others, a man's talents are often suffered to cool, before he is permitted an opportunity to display them; Aickin felt this sensibly on his first engagement, for the parts he would have done justice to, were in the possession of others; so that his employment was consigned to the hero, and often the secondary character in some bad farce; the scarcity of performers of any merit in Foote's company, however, has since done him more justice; and he has, for some summers past, convinced the managers of Drury-lane, that he had more about him than what they at first imagined.

As

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As an actor, without pretending to be capital and striking, there is an ease and manner about his performance, which are very easy and natural. His forte lies pretty nearly alike in tragedy and comedy, in both of which he may be considered as a good second: in short, the whole of Mr. Aickin's theatrical merit, may, with great propriety, be assimilated to an agreeable beauty, who, without having any charm particularly striking, possesses a captivating something all together.

Mr.



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Mr. D I D I E R.

THOUGH this gentleman's title to theatrical fame is as yet unsettled, being, as we may say, but just shewn to the public, yet the useful talents he seems to possess, entitle him to a post in the light infantry of our summer Bayes; beside, as they have never yet been cultivated with metropolitan applause, there is a presumption they may, one day or other, be a greater object of enquiry.

Mr. Didier is the eldest son of a gentleman of reputation and credit. His father, who is now in an office of considerable trust at Harwich, gave him the education of a gentleman, and got him placed in his Majesty's navy as a midshipman. A dislike to the service, and that volatileness of disposition which, in a peculiar manner, characterised the earlier part of his life, were the occasion of his quitting his profession; he therefore very soon left the sea, and commenced a son of the stage, with a small straggling party of irregulars, who were nightly murdering blank verse and prose, to the no less delight

delight than amazement of the inhabitants of Dover. Their stay in that town was not long, for soon after we find our hero travelling from town to town, with this most wretched set of comedians at his heels, till through application, his theatrical talents ripened into that very moderate kind of merit, which entitled him to become a sharer in a more established company.

To follow him through these peregrinations, would be drawing us into lengths inconsistent with the design of these memoirs. The following circumstance, however, which happened to him at West Chester, should not be over-looked: playing the part of Charles in the *Busy Body*, and in the scene where he leaps from the balcony, Didier possessing the full spirit of the part, unfortunately jumped down on the main trap, in the centre of the stage, which giving way all of a sudden, suspended poor Charles by the chin, in a posture awkward as it was dangerous. As soon as he was taken up, it was discovered his throat was cut in a most dangerous manner, and his life for some time despaired of: however, he had the good fortune to experience a cure speedy as it was perfect, which is the more to be wondered at, as he was, at that time, from his irregularities, in a state of constitution not very favourable to medicine.

Didier.

Didier having naturally good spirits, and possessing a general desire to please, his principal fault was ductility, a disposition, tho' not *positively* vicious, yet capable of leading us often into many an error, which the coolness of reflection must condemn. It produced similar consequences in our hero, for from a continual practice of complimenting the opinions and vices of other people, at the expence of his own judgment, he endangered both his reputation and constitution. Whilst in the pursuit of this kind of life, he had the good fortune to be left a legacy of seven hundred pounds sterling, by a near relation; this sum, to a man of his experience, one would be led to think, might recover him; but so totally was he immersed in pleasure, that it only spurred his appetite, and relaxed every rein to riot and dissipation.

To a man thus disposed, this legacy could not last long; a little better than a twelve-month saw the greater part of it spent, without his taking one step to establish himself the more either in his profession, or any other kind of business. This reflexion at last roused him, and just upon the eve of its being all spent, (a period when most men become rather desperate) to the astonishment of all his bottle companions, he on a sudden drew in, recovered the use of a good natural understanding, and has ever since point-

ed.

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ed his pursuits in public to the cultivation of his profession; in private, to the establishment of a good character.

What assisted this change in his disposition, was his marriage with Miss Du Bellamy, sister to Mr. Du Bellamy of Covent-garden theatre; meeting with this Lady at Smock-alley theatre, Dublin, he was so struck with her, as to give him the first disrelish to a life of dissipation; and (what is not often the case) finding this antipathy increase after marriage, he became at length a total changeling, and has thereby added (it is to be hoped) to the *long* catalogue of those free-livers, whom matrimony has snatched from destruction.

As an actor, Mr. Didier's merit may be said to verge to no extreme, though we think him above mediocrity; for though he wants that luxuriance and variety so necessary to constitute a perfect comedian, he never offends, but is, on the contrary, a sensible and judicious speaker. His particular walk in comedy has been in the foppish cast; and one reason why, perhaps, his genius has been prevented from taking that spread nature might have designed it, is his having been, early in life, too studious a copyist; a fault too incident to young performers, but which should be carefully guarded against by all those who would aspire to the first forum. To the profession of an actor, he joins the amusement of a scribbler; and amongst many

many little things in the literary way, he is the translator of a favourite song called *The Linnets*, from the French of Moliere; a ballad as remarkably pretty in its manner, as in its diction.



Mr. D A V I E S.

IT would be equally difficult, as unuseful, to explore the origin of all our stage heroes; the profession itself is superior to such enquiries; for, like the *sea-service*, no man is refused for want of *birth* or *morals*, provided he is but *able-bodied*: indeed, were any other kind of scrutiny necessary, the public would find themselves much abridged of their entertainment, and the talents of many a *vagabond* consigned to retreat and obscurity.

From what parents Mr. Davies is descended, even the records of St. Giles's are silent. His entrance into life, which if at all remembered, dates from his being taken in as a servant to Aristophanes; here he acquired good eating and cloathing, and recommending himself to his master, by being

ng very *bandy*, he, in time, added indolence, and something like repartee.

It is well known that no manager depends more on the success of his *own* pieces and acting than Aristophanes; this has led him to take little care of the merit of the under part of his company; filling up the chasm of dialogue with any degree of decency, is sufficient for him; nor even in this would he be particular, was it not for the audience, who sometimes interpose by expressing their disapprobation, as in the case of Mr. F—d, a gentleman whom he brought over from Ireland, some time ago, who was so conspicuously disqualified for the stage, that, as Shakespeare says, “one would be led to imagine he was the produce of one of nature’s journeymen.”—Having this circumstance in his favour, Davies’s ambition led him to make application to his master for leave to change his *livery* for that of the Muses: his *good services* demanded some indulgence, and Aristophanes was not ungrateful; he gave directions to his treasurer to put him down on the books at a small salary, and soon after brought him out in the character of *the Minor*.

Stationed and uneducated as he was, little could be expected from this first attempt in the character of a gentleman; all that can be said of him is, that from being perfect in the *words*, and not being a bad figure,

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figure, he secured the indulgence of the gross of the audience; and as for criticism, he was too contemptible a morsel to garble.

Finding himself in this *elevated* situation of life, his sentiments kept equal pace;—fine women and French wines indeed, his finances nor credit would allow, but as for humble Port, and the range of *the Garden*, who but he? *He kept it up* for some time at a high rate,—but, O disastrous chance! Hymen, as if inflamed at the indignities offered his rites, bribed Venus to set fire to his *nose*, which the artful baggage did so dexterously, that it is, at present, with the greatest *daily art* he can preserve it from falling into his porter pot.

We depend on the delicacy of our readers to excuse us *raking* further into the many anecdotes that may be produced to *adorn* the life of this hero; we shall mention but one more, and consign him “to *strut* and fret his hour upon the stage, and then be heard no more.”

Having some quarrel with his manager the summer before last, Aristophanes, in a passion, cried out, “Damn you, quit my service, and I’ll give you twenty pounds this minute! As the bard accompanied his threat by pulling out a twenty pound bank note, Davies accepted of it, and withdrew immediately from the theatre.

After

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After this event, Weston and he set up as managers in the Borough, and succeeded tolerably well for some time ; but the trading people in that neighbourhood justly aware of the consequences of such an amusement, sent some peace-officers to interrupt their diversion in the very middle of *Richard the Third*, and by an original stroke of critical abridgement, lopped off two of the acts of that celebrated tragedy. Thus thrown upon the world anew, his *quondam* master (who, in spite of all his wit, does not want for good nature) restored him to his usual rank, where he since continues a *thorough servant* of the Theatre Royal, Hay-market.

Uniformity obliges us to say something of this actor, otherwise we would dismiss him for want of *materials* ; as to his person, it was tolerable, till indolence and dissipation bloated it to a rank luxuriance, but now it only qualifies him for *Bardo'ph* ; as to his voice, it is loud, without being tuneable ; and as to his address, it may very well be conceived, from his former situation, which is that of under-breeding, aping gentility.

C O N-



CONCLUSION.

IN so general an undertaking as this, we are sensible there are many anecdotes that we are unacquainted with ; this may very well be supposed from the difficulty of the attempt, as nothing but the most *confidential intimacy* with each person, could possibly procure us this knowledge ; an information we hope our good-natured readers will excuse us not purchasing at *such a price*. But after all what would this avail ? It would only lengthen these memoirs to another volume, and consequently tickle the ears of those who are eternally pleased with adventure. Those material anecdotes, that mark the bias of the mind, and lead to the discovery of general character, we have with no less assiduity than fidelity collected ; as such we have presented them to the public, and flatter ourselves they will be found as useful as they are entertaining.

We are likewise sensible there are several performers, who may think themselves aggrieved

grieved by not holding a rank in these memoirs, and will produce as vouchers for this neglect, their *salaries*, and the *parts* they are in *possession of*. Without descending to ill-natured particulars, the general answer we would give these claimants is, "we have engaged for none in our title-page but **PRINCIPALS**;" and finding them, after an impartial investigation, to be deficient in this character, we thought ourselves sufficiently justified in precluding them. Indeed we may seem to have departed a little from this plan, by introducing several of the performers of the Hay-market; but this *summer battalion* is engaged in so different a service, to what the other theatres are, that those who would be considered as inferiors in either Drury-lane or Covent-garden, act here as principals; beside, introducing the manager alone, without some part of his histrionic corps, would be as awkward as sending a monarch on the stage unattended with his guards.

To excel, as a player, is indeed very difficult, and but little less, as has been observed, "Than to be a living and moving epitome of those arts that rank foremost amongst the polite." This difficulty will be further explained, by observing on the one side, how *very few*, of so numerous a profession, rise to any considerable degree of theatrical eminence; and on the other, how

many

many, who from the flattery of inclination, imagine themselves every way qualified for this purpose, yet, after a few nights trial, sink into neglect and obscurity; so many examples, one would be led to imagine, should deter others from being duped by the same solicitations; but the present miserable state of the stage proves otherwise, when we see actors and actresses every night thrust forward in the most capital parts of tragedy and comedy, without education, genius, or even personal accomplishments; to such we may apply, with great justice, the fable of the ass in the lion's skin, who, instead of partaking of any of the qualities of that noble animal, by such a metamorphosis, only held up his own weaknesses in a more glaring point of view.

P O S T.



P O S T S C R I P T.

NED SHUTER *to the* PRINTER, *greeting.*

WHEREAS in a quotation from a book intituled, *Theatrical Biography*, there is a circumstantial account of my *family*, (See page 40; vol. II.) I beg, for the credit of your book, and to avoid an imposition upon the public, in a matter which *so much concerns them* to be acquainted with, — that you will correct a mistake the writer of those *Memoirs* has made. For WHEREAS the said writer does, with great confidence assert, that my “*Father was a Cbairman, that my Mother sold oysters, and that I, NED SHUTER, was born in a CELLAR;*” now, though I will acknowledge that my *Father was a Cbairman*, though I have no objection to own that my *Mother sold oysters* in the *winter*, and *cucumbers* in the *summer*, yet I do solemnly aver, that I was *not* born in a CELLAR, but in a *front room*, up *two pair* of stairs, at one Mr. *Merit's*, an eminent *Chimney-Sweeper*, in *Vine-street, St. Giles's*. Having thus discharged my conscience, by rectifying any mistakes the public might fall into on so important a subject, I remain with gratitude,

Their obedient Servant,

NED SHUTER.



* * The following descriptive
* Poem on the Merits, &c. of
the Performers of our The-
atres, we hope will prove an
agreeable Addition to this
Work.



Extract from

The Smithfield Rosciad.

"THE world's a stage"—so mighty Shakespeare
said :

Each frets his hour, and mingles with the dead.—
Some play the higher,—some the lower part,
But his the noblest with an honest heart.

Each hugs himself, and with a partial eye
Here thinks his neighbour low, and there too high :
So far we're right, as partial to our own,
To make this bitter draught of life go down.
Statesmen, though great in rank, are small in parts,
For diff'rent interest turn their *little* hearts :

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L

But

But whether always so, or now the vogue,
 He with the greatest wit's the greatest rogue!
 God help the fool! for what with wit and lies
 He must be caught—when spiders swarm like flies.

These are the parts, and each fulfils the plan,
 The wit, the fool, the knave, the honest man;
 In each I've play'd, and mark'd the moral page,
 Held up the mirror to a vicious age,
 Pointed at vice, and all her bawdy crew,
 And wept with virtue, when she wept for you:
 Wish'd from my inmost soul the parts might please,
 And pleasing move, the very wish'd disease.—

If various servitudes of long grimace,
 May in the public's favour share a place,
 Must I retire unprais'd?—some few there are
 Would ever bind me in the comic sphere,
 Unfeeling souls, to nature, and to health,
 Will burn 'cause *Garrick* hath amass'd some wealth,
 True he hath some, the very wealth was yours,
 For which he gave ye his theatric powers:
 "Pshaw, cries *Selinda*, should he tho' retire,
 "Till age or sickness wear him, or we tire?"
 True, he should not,—but now he kindly begs
 Your pity, Ladies,—whilst he boasts some legs?
 "Lord, adds *Miss Prude*!—such insolence indeed,
 "Actors like him should by the Town be free'd,"
 And so he hopes—and with his errors too,
 Which when you mention, pray relate them few?
 All men have more, or less—'tis human lot,
 Did even *Roscius* play without a spot?
 Critics will ever drag those faults to view,
 But *Garrick* triumphs—when they find them few.

O'Brien advance,—for sure O'Brien's parts
 Have stole some corners, in some ladies hearts;
 A genius

A genius blest with every pleasing power,
 And form'd for rapture, for one night's amour.
 Can ye conceal the language of the eye,
 And cease to flirt the fan, when he goes by?
 Say, would ye speak, if there was room to prove
 One little fault against that man of love?

Tho' void of crimson, if a comic face
 May in the public's favour share a place,
 King has some right to praise—yet still perhaps
 You're not so hearty as he merits claps.
 It would be tedious to recount th' applause,
 His various characters from Candour draws:
 Mark in *Love a la Mode*—where Shuter puffs,
 He rides as easy as Sir Archy snuffs.
 I have been told—and told without a sneer,
 That King's at Plymouth what your Garrick's here:
 O! what a proof of taste—a stinking port:
 Hold, censure—there our men of arms resort:
 They spread the truth,—and to the fact they'll swear,
 King shines in *Bobadil*,—and melts in *Lear*.
 In Richard, I a little more engross,
 But King is equal—when he bawls—a horse.

Palmer, hop in,—with thy peculiar air,
 With all thy taste of bag, and solitaire:
 For men must own it, when the Fair allow
 That Palmer is the tulip of a beau.

Yates, merry man—to Shuter cannot bow
 Here, in grimace—or in a Smithfield show;
 Nor can ye blame him in domestic life,
 When Major Oakley cures a *jealous wife*:
 Faults he hath some—but then his humour draws
 The hands of *Gods* to drown them with applause.

E'en nature's errors pass not critics eyes,
 Garrick's too short,—and Bransby's out of size.

Was ever yet one man, without one spot,
 But if a Genius, nine to four, a Sot ;
 Defects in nature are beneath retort,
 Tho' Foote drinks claret—by one word—distort.
 At real vices let our satire fly,
 Nor tell poor Davies that he wants an eye.
 But touch the man, when affectation draws
 Beyond all decency, and Shakespeare's laws :
 I well remember both the time and place,
 When this Othello fear'd to spoil that face ;
 Rejected smut, rejected Shakespeare's scene,
 Yet more the *Negro* than if black he'd been.
 I did not pass uncensur'd in the part ;
 Tho' Quin was heavy, yet that Quin was smart ;
 When mask'd—how like ye Garrick—how's the
 play ?

The boy I've seen, but where's the kettle, pray ?
 Twelve rising miles remove the fretting scene,
 And dare Othello upon Richmond green,
 Sneer on the mighty manager and crew,
 And laugh and squall with Mrs. Daly too :
 Allow them neither start, nor pause in tune
 Here prove they oh ! too late—there, ah ! too soon.
 Beg Mrs. Lee would not be quite so proud,
 Or, 'midst her acting, talk aside—so loud :
 Not to forget amidst her regal train,
 She's but a chamber-maid in Drury-lane ;
 Give Weston merit, for the man hath some,
 But beg *great* Mr. Hayes may still be dumb :
 And tho' the former loves a tawdry punk,
 The latter, like him, sometimes will get drunk :
 Tho' more, perhaps, with vanity than gin,
 Hayes cannot act, but still that Hayes can grin :
 Allow no merit when the man has none,
 In pity still let Dibble's eye alone.
 But why so serious—for you love to roast !
 Don't Bransby tread too heavy for a ghost ?

He

He does indeed—now I'll allow that fair,
 For Ghosts, as shadows, move as light as air:
 We'll do our utmost then to melt him down,
 And hope he'll move, and fly to please the Town.

How weak is reason, and how blind is man,
 When woes, like fogs, obscure his fairest plan:
 The world declares—that on our stage of strife
 D***s is held—the cause a pretty wife:
 Talk on, vile world—for scandal's never dead;
 But pray be tender of a Beauty's bread?

If form, if beauty, if majestic grace,
 If all the powers of eloquence and face
 Attention claim—'tis Barry's;—who can rage,
 In love like her, or who in love assuage?
 Were not her merits great, as great their dates,
 Some wavering few might be allur'd by Yates,
 And be forgiven: for such superior charms
 Might draw the desert hermit to her arms,
 Might raise,—I dare not say—might even raise
 May-poles to love,—and kneel to offer praise.

Of Genius lovely offspring,—Palmer, rise,
 A virtuous form, without the art of eyes:
 When wife to Sullen * proves her wretched fate,
 Have you not wish'd those charms a better mate?
 Have you not wish'd in spite, a little sin,
 And curs'd poor Scrub's unlucky coming in?
 Tell me, for I am sure she drew regard,
 The Guardian courted by so sweet a Ward,
 She wants some feeling, dash'd with sparks of fun,
 I would not have her quite so much a nun.

* Beaux Stratagem.

A contrast truly,—here, that truth must fail:
 Call Hart a nun,—must be offending T——.
 'Tis very true, she has but gleams of grace,
 But blest with an *endearing*, lasting face.

Pope, on her *bulk* of mirth, hath fairly rais'd
 A character, by all admir'd and prais'd:
 There can be few who see the lively lass,
 But praise the likeness, if they hold the glass;
 Mark how the passions of sixteen appear,
 When novels wound the heart, and charm the ear;
 Could Richardson himself delineate more,
 Or gain more praise, than Honeycomb hath bore?

Besides these Veterans, there are still some few,
 Just from the nursery come, and *spick, span, new*:
 Theatric miracles from Dublin's shore,
 To please, alas! when Garrick is no more:
 Their names excuse, the bills will timely shew,
 The Lears, the Richards, that I promise now.

Foots I've engaged—and part the strolling crew,
 Poor Mr. *Snah*, and Major *Sturgeon* too;
 It needs no recommending,—Foot's *fat flaps*
 Will quite obliterate me, with peals of claps:
 The Major's battles, and the Major's *cane*,
 Will raise the glory of old Drury-lane.
 Wits swarm like fools, and will invent to please,
 When I'm retir'd in hopes of years of ease:
 Give me your wishes,—let my wish prevail,
 And breathe, ye lovely Fair, an am'rous gale,
 Your little sighs I'll drown at White-hall stairs,
 And with them bury my theatric cares:
 In soft Italia search for something new,
 And to a gen'rous Country—bid—adieu.

Ladies,

Ladies, adieu,—adieu ye wits, ye men,
 Buskins, adieu—adieu—*dear* Isle agen.

But what a tax is here ! and made by those
 Who can't experience what themselves impose ;
 A tax as four as Cyder's e'er can prove
 To those who make it, and to those who love :
 " Averse alike to flatter, or offend,"
 I must resist ? you can't !—then Candour tend ?



In that wide place where tatter'd ensigns wave,
 Where Oxen over drove rebellious rave,
 Where horses whinny, and where Jockeys cheat,
 Pigs grunt, Calves bellow, Ewes, and Wethers
 bleat,

Where stinks engender, houses nod in air,
 Where once Bartholomew prolong'd his Fair,
 (Till City Mayors repin'd at Smithfield pride,)
 Where riots ripen'd, and where Parrot died.

A Gothic Vatican of lofty size

Conspicuous stands, and nodding hurts the eyes.

In antient days it might, perhaps, have bore

A martyr's virtues,—now the common whore

Lewd revels hold, and gin-drunk villains keep

Their crimes from justice, and in darkness sleep ;

In this a dull Academy is plac'd,

Which Yates and Shuter, many years have grac'd :

Where Kings and Queens are got without a bed,

And taught, to squeak, and squall for paint, and
 bread

Where Dancers fit their legs to trip the stage,

And infant Harlots practise to engage ;

Here Dullness, as a part to all well known,

Erected Bourk's, and great Fitzpatrick's throne.

Now

Now strumpet FAME her clarionet had blown
 In every hole, and corner of the Town:
 "On such a day, in dulcett pomp array'd,
 "Their heavy Coronation should be made:"
 From ev'ry part the high and vulgar run,
 Some at the setting, some the rising sun,
 People of all degrees impatient meet,
 From Radcliff-cross, to high South Audley Street:
 In frocks and bombs, in garters, swords, and bags,
 In wigs, and no wigs,—satins, silks, and rags,
 From Court, from Inns, from pulpits, and from garrets,
 On foot, on horse, in carts, in hacks, and chariots;
 All eager press to see a sight so rare.
 A coronation, and Theatric fair.

No Wilton carpets smooth the rigged way,
 But various filths unmov'd, collected lay:
 Six mealy pastry-cooks first stride along,
 Blanching the way with *Erse* and *Ossian's* song:
 Then four theatric Infants next appear,
 Holding in effigy the rob'd *VOLTAIRE*.
 Like *TITTY-DOLL* a nightman solus comes
 With *HONE's* works new gilt from Brewhouse bums:
 Two heads support two open empty trunks,
 With *Smollet's* hist'ry lin'd—for two vile punks:
 Six butter boys with each one pound in hand,
 Folded in *MALLOCK's* plays compleat the band:
 A whiffing suburb Grocer next was seen,
 To light his pipe with *Murphy's Desert* scene:
 Sons of the Clergy seven strew the ways,
 With *Foot's* translations of old *Moliere's* plays:
Love a la mode three high cheek'd Scotsmen bore,
 Which as they mov'd they curs'd, and cursing tore:
Mozeen dark Usher came with one white wand,
Love at first sight fill'd up his wooden hand:
 Behind

Behind him mov'd with soft affected pace
 Miss Molly Mattocks with a velvet face,
 Quav'ring, and straining out of tune, and rule,
 Like Shock when squeezing of his matin stool :
 Turn'd as he walk'd, and curs'd his iron fate,
 Wishing castration, and Peretti's state :
 Who with a bolster'd form, advanc'd in song,
 A spontoon scarce so small, nor half so long,
 Tenducci he ;—for surely such another,
 Was never got by man,—or own'd by mother ;
 Behind these poor apologies for men
 Came flutt'ring Elliot, pretty, wanton Hen,
 Dress'd in a dismal crape :—a crimson shame
 Declar'd she'd injur'd him who rais'd her fame :
 So sweet a form drew pity from the mob,
 Who prais'd contrition, and gave sob for sob :
 One thousand paramours attend her train,
 Who from her piercing eye receive disdain.—
 Behind this motley crew, COTT—L— came,
 As dead to common sense as dead to fame :
 A formal, stooping, flam'ring, hodge-podge thing,
 Who Dab-chick like mov'd off on foot, on wing :
 Badley, Marr, Burton, Parsons, Watkins, Lee,
 Appear'd dull sons of dull tautology ;
 Fox folly's standard bore,—Strange ruff'd the drum,
 And Mrs. Bennet thumb'd—a dull hum-strum :
 Behind a shadow of Will. Whitehead came,
 His left hand held a mug, his right leg lame ;
 The other hand the *School for Lovers* spread,
 And nodding onions consecrate his head :
 Upon each shoulder sat two owls in tears,
 The happy omens of some future years ;
 The mob the presage mark'd with one huzzai,
 The phantom trembled—shrunk, and slid away.—

From Covent-Garden issu'd *Village Madge*,
 A rural Queen ; and beauty was her badge :

She,

She, in the Bower of Love a Goddess bred,
 With raptures kindled,—and with pleasure fed:
 Grace of the painted Theatres, the eyes,
 The ears of either sex; the brave, the wise
 Drink love, drink melody; confess *my* choice
 The loveliest woman, with the sweetest voice:
 These all, and all that yet the smiling stage
 Adorn, or hath adorn'd in earlier age,
 Wit, beauty, laughter, gaiety, good sense
 Meet in *this* Queen of gentle dalliance.
 Smart DYER trip'd with various ribbons hung,
 And fair Miss MACKLIN follow'd, chaste and
 young:

Ease and good-nature, with unhurtful sport,
 Grac'd with peculiar Majesty her port.
 And she the Woman, whom sweet *Music* made
 To excel herself,—in lilly white array'd
 Sweet Brent! advanc'd, by right a little proud,
 And gentle echo quite inspir'd, the croud;
 Nature's dear Darling, and the Summer's pride
 Soft philomel, the softer Vincent's guide,
 On whom; the shade of Gay enraptur'd smil'd,
 Calling her *Polly*, and his own sweet child:
 The two Miss Youngs respectful distance keep:
 And Mrs. Lamb and Jones were seen to weep.
 Hopkins, and Plim a wantonness express'd,
 The latter like a Captain sprucely dress'd:
 The neck retorted Nancy must assume,
 And Shuter *squall'd* behind as 'Squire Groom†.
 Baker a basket bore in Shuter's train,
 And in it peep'd the gentle Miss Cockain:
 Bradshaw supinely smil'd, and rode a-stride,
 And Wilford danc'd before the kind Miss Bride:

• Love a la mode.

Ten

Ten brooms revers'd, ten ragged sweepers bear,
 As many snuffers glitter in their rear :
 A brazen trumpet echo'd through the course,
 And Catley smil'd upon a pye-ball'd Horse,
 In robes of silver, and as fair as milk.
 And flutt'ring half in air on wings of silk :
 The wanton mob, the little wanton hail !
 Whilst tall Sir Whiffle kiss'd her horses floating tail.
 Mills fancy's standard bore, with martial grace,
 And Miles, and Rooker follow'd face to face,
 Plac'd on an Ostrich, which a sailor led,
 And Mr. Weller slam'd the fool in Red :
 Pantomime figures thousands next are brought,
 And Mrs. Dyer gallop'd on a goat,
 With all that beauty, gaiety and air,
 That forms a face superlatively fair :
 She fair, she kind, most fair, most kind, she's known,
 The wish, the toast, the passion of the Town.
 Legions of various colour'd imps advance.
 Furies in painted fire rise up and dance :
 Led on by Læc :—the grisly King of fire
 Thrice wav'd his fork, and thrice the fiends jump'd
 higher :

In dull sepulchral notes the Devil groan'd,
 In answer Proserpine as sweetly moan'd :
 Miller, far fairer than fair Enna's Miss,
 First pluck'd, a plucking flowers by lustful Dis* :
 Say ?—may a poet dare to tempt the shore,
 And try to win what Orpheus lost of yore !
 More gay, more kind, more sweet, than all He said,
 In pleasure fashion'd, and in beauty bred.
 Ten Cattle Drivers next, with ten short sticks,
 In grease, and various clouts, shew various tricks :

* Pluto ravished Proserpine in the garden of Enna.

Two Chimney-sweepers with a foot-charg'd ass,
 With WHITE, and CLARK at top supinely pass;
 A phalanx thick of Bill-stickers appear'd,
 High on their poles, the *Mayor of Garrat* rear'd:
 Behind creep'd four supporting of a butt,
 And in it brasen'd Proteus Sammy Foot;
 "Now, now you see me, now, you see me not,"
 A Bawd, a Major, Auctioneer, a Sot:
 The mob enrag'd, to see themselves in mask,
 A Cooper sent, and headed up the cask:
 Whitfield ne'er gave the Genius such a rub,
 They cheer'd the conquest—and they ston'd the tub.
 F—— elated, glory'd in his shame:
 And ran, forgetting that he had been lame.

The Goddess then o'er each anointed head,
 The weeping juice of solemn onion shed;
 Then thrice she groan'd!—the Fiends thrice groan'd
 again!

All hail! all hail! all hail! the promis'd reign:
 The fogs increas'd—the Goddess spoke no more,
 Bourk, and Fitzpatrick,—Sons of SMITHFIELD
 roar. ———

Seats, scaffolds, benches, rails, gave crack for crack,
 Some lam'd, some heat, some bruis'd, came limp-
 ing back.

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F I N I S